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THE REV.D MR. T. BRADBURY.

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THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS,

CONSIDERED IN SIXTY-ONE SERMONS.

Sam'l. Miller.

WHEREIN

The DEITY of CHRIST is proved upon no other Evidence than the *Word of GOD*, and with no other View than for the *Salvation of Men*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE REVEREND

THOMAS BRADBURY.

Know that for THY SAKE I have suffered rebuke. Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by THY NAME, O Lord God of Hosts. JER. xv. 15, 16.

VOL. I.

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M.DCC.XCV.

TO THE

CONGREGATION AT FETTER-LANE,

AND

Thoſe who attend the Lord's Day's Evening Lecture at Salter's Hall.

THE doctrine of the ever-bleſſed Trinity was never known, till very lately, to be matter of debate among Proteſtant Diſſenters. Our fathers univerſally owned it, with reverence and a godly fear; and the generation who have riſen up to deny it, appear to act from a *new ſpirit*, as well as upon a *new ſcheme*; as if that which had always the chief place among articles of faith, was now to be lifted up in ſcorn, and purſued with banter inſtead of argument. I ſhall have no regard at preſent to the ungenerous oppoſitions that have been made to the cauſe by exclamations about charity, reviling confeſſions, and making a *ſubſcription* to the faith, which has been the conſtant practice of miniſters ever ſince the Reformation, to be a brand of infamy. It was found the ſhorteſt way to amuſe the world, and divert them from the only queſtion they had before them, *viz.* whether the doctrine, as we have owned it, is revealed in the Bible or no. It is a great deal eaſier to load an opinion with the hard names of perſecution, creed-making, and impoſition, than to prove that it is an error.

We have endeavoured that our faith may ſpread abroad, to be ſeen and read of all men, in a well known confeſſion, that "There is but one only the living and true God; and, "that there are three Perſons in the Godhead, the Father, "Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one God, the "ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory."

The propoſition is complex, and can either be defended or baffled, no other way than by taking the ſeveral doctrines apart, which are plainly theſe five.

I. *That*

I. *That there is but one only the living and true God.* This we affirm, not only upon the principles of reaſon, but that *greater light* that rules the church, the written Word. Therefore the charge of *Tritheiſm*, or owning of *three Gods*, would have been ſpared by any but ſuch as have a contempt of modeſty, againſt thoſe who confeſs no more than *one*. Under this glorious name of *God* we mean "a Spirit, "infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wiſdom, "power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs and truth." And as this deſcription belongs to the Moſt High alone, ſo we dare give the title, in that ſenſe, to none beſides him.

II. Another branch of our confeſſion is, that *there are three Perſons in the Divine Nature; Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* Theſe are plainly diſtinguiſhed; the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Spirit. The liberty that ſome take to wrangle about the manner of the difference, whether it is ſpecifical or numerical, only ſhews a vanity that *would be wiſe*, as if they thought to make an experiment whether God is incomprehenſible. It is enough for us, that the Scripture mentions neither more nor fewer than three. We add, that *theſe three are one God.* This is to be proved in parts, and therefore the next propoſition is,

III. The Father is revealed, in his own Book, under theſe glorious titles.

IV. The Son, and

V. The Holy Ghoſt, are declared in the names, attributes, operations and honours, which we read of as arguments of eternal power and godhead.

Whether any of theſe doctrines are falſe or no, ought to be tried by taking it aſunder from the reſt. But if they are all true, that is, agree to the language of the Bible, then the general article is a fair concluſion from the whole, that *theſe three are the ſame in eſſence, and equal in power and glory.*

It is the fourth of theſe propoſitions that I have conſidered in the following ſermons: *Firſt*, As a revealed *truth*. *Secondly*, As an awful *myſtery*. *Thirdly*, As an argument of practical holineſs.

1. In

1. In proving the *truth*, that Chriſt, equally with the Father and Holy Spirit, is the Supreme God, I have honeſtly given a reaſon of the hope that is in me, by ſearching the Scriptures daily whether the things are ſo or no. The opinions of Fathers, councils, divines of all ſorts, and indeed the whole body of the faithful, from *Egypt* even until now, has been well collected by others; but you know, I have uſed none of theſe arguments, though I always read with pleaſure by what a great cloud of witneſſes we are encompaſſed; nor can I think it very modeſt, that they who have obtained ſo good a report through faith, ſhould be treated with contempt by ſuch as are far from being ſuperior to them in learning or holineſs. However, you are my witneſſes, and ſo may the whole world be now, that I have pleaded no authority but that of Scripture. As I read, I believe; as I believe, ſo I ſpeak. I can affirm, as Mr *Chillingworth* did, that THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE is the rule of my religion, and of all that I either think or ſay about the Divinity of Chriſt. And I fear the memory of that great man is like to ſuffer, who was known ſo much to *cry up the Bible*, when the memoirs of his life are furniſhed by thoſe who *cry it down*. This doctrine is not maintained upon a ſcanty revelation; you will ſee, that the evidence for it is not confined to two or three texts, but flows in all the ſtream of Scripture; as you will find by a large collection at the end of theſe ſermons, which, if carefully read, will have their weight in proving the Divinity of Chriſt, and the Myſtery of Godlineſs.

2. This I have alſo conſidered as a *myſtery*. It is the familiar and darling word of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to treat it with contempt is talking without book. I found, that in this part of my work, I was come to the main pinch of the queſtion; whether God has ever told us things that we could not have diſcovered without revelation, and that we cannot explain and comprehend with it; and if he has done ſo, whether we ought not to believe him upon his own word?

3. It

3. It was a thing of the greateſt weight with me, that this is a doctrine of *godlineſs*. It appears ſo both in the book of God, and in the lives of men. Charity, humility, devotion, and univerſal benevolence, are not impaired by a belief of the Trinity; and, as we find by experience, they never grow upon an oppoſition to it; they are not *Arian* plants, as far as I can either hear or ſee.

I hope, as the providence of God led me into this ſubject, ſo his good Spirit has carried me through it. The ſermons have been of ſervice to myſelf, and to many of you that heard them; ſo that whilſt I was imparting to you this ſpiritual gift, I have been eſtabliſhed together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. I have given ſome account of my preaching upon this text in the laſt ſermon, and therefore I ſhall ſay no more in this preface upon that head.

I have endeavoured to make the reader's work as eaſy as I could, by diſtinguiſhing the particular deſign of every ſermon with a capital word in the running title. Thus, when I am *proving* the *Deity* of Chriſt, you will find it in thoſe parts of the diſcourſe where the word GOD is ſo printed. When the doctrine is expoſed to our adoration and *wonder*, it is conſidered as a MYSTERY, and the *application* you will meet with, when it is urged as an argument of GODLINESS.

I have heard the defaming of many ſince my zeal for this doctrine convinced them I was not to be brought into their meaſures, either to bury the truth, or to betray it. But ſome of you God has made to differ, by ſetting home upon your hearts the arguments that were ſo uneaſy to them. They went out from us who were not of us, and by their going out it is manifeſt they were not all of us; but this vacancy has been more than filled up by ſeveral whom theſe very ſermons were a means of bringing into our church, which had been a ſtone of ſtumbling to others. To thoſe that periſh, Chriſt is fooliſhneſs; but to them who are ſaved, He is the wiſdom and power of God.

I

I have known what it is, as many of you can remember, to be lampooned in pamphlets, belied in newſpapers, threatened by great men, and mobbed by thoſe of the baſer ſort, for the *Britiſh* liberty, and the *Hanover* ſucceſſion. And if I am to run the ſame round over again for the commonwealth of *Iſrael*, and the King of kings, I ſhall think, as Dr Owen ſaith, "It is no ſmall honour to be re-"proached by men given up to a ſpirit of railing and re-"viling; and no perſon of ſobriety will contend againſt "thoſe who reject with ſcorn the eternal Deity of the Son "of God, and the ſatisfactory atonement he made for the "ſins of men."—Doctrine of the Trinity vindicated, p. 145.

I can ſay upon this argument, what one, whom both the grace of God, and the wrath of man have made eminent in the Chriſtian world. His laſt will and teſtament gives ſuch an evidence of the witneſs he had within himſelf, that if I might but feel his joys, I could be content to ſucceed him in all the reproaches that were poured upon him from *Popiſh* and *Socinian* malice.

"* I profeſs, *as he ſaith*, according to the meaſure of "God's favour to me, that I have deſigned both from the "pulpit and the preſs, to deliver his pure and uncorrupted "word. And I alſo aver, that in all my diſputes with the "enemies of the Goſpel, I have uſed no crafty or deceitful "methods, but gave myſelf up to an honeſt and open de-"fence of truth. But, alas! my ſtudy and zeal (if it is fit "to be called ſo) was ſo faint and languid, that I confeſs "myſelf awanting in many things that were ſuitable to "that noble cauſe."

To this declaration in his *laſt will*, I will add what he does

* Profiteor, me ſedulo pro modo gratiæ et benignitatis qua Deus erga me uſus eſt, operam dediſſe, ut cum in concionibus, tum etiam in ſcriptis, pure ac caſte verbum ipſius prædicarem, et fideliter ſacram ipſius ſcripturam interpretarer. Teſtor etiam ac profiteor, me in contentionibus et diſputationibus omnibus, quæ mihi cum hoſtibus Evangelii habendæ fuerunt, nullis præſtigiis, nullis malis artibus et ſophiſticis, uſum eſſe; ſed candide ac ſincere in veritate propugnanda verſatum eſſe. Verum, hei mihi! ſtudium illud meum et zelus (ſi hoc nomine dignus eſt) adeo remiſſus et languidus fuit, ut innumera mihi ad munus meum præclare fungendum defuiſſe fateor.

does in some of his *last words* to the magistrates and ministers of *Geneva*.

" * As to the doctrine which you have heard from me, " I profess that I did not take it up in a hasty dubious way, " but taught with sincerity the word of God; and had I " acted otherwise, I should have had as many fears of his " anger, as I now have hopes that my work in preaching " has not displeased him. Therefore I take the greater li- " berty to declare before God and you, that I make no " doubt but Satan, after his old way, will raise up wicked, " unstable, and giddy men to corrupt the sincere doctrine " that I have delivered among you."

Through the Divine goodness, I can make this reflection on that ministry that I have received; and though innumerable follies have easily beset me, for which I desire to be humbled, yet for the space of above eighteen years in which I have been a Pastor, and twenty years of my service in the evening-lecture, I have never either denied a truth that appeared evident to *me*, or shammed one that I thought useful to *you*.

I recommend both you and the sermons that are now put into your hands, to the blessing of that JESUS for whose sake, and in whose cause so great a part of my life and strength have been spent among you.

And I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those that do not believe, and that my service may be accepted of the saints; that I may be among you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen. Rom. xv. 30.—33.

SERMON

* Quod ad doctrinam attinet quam ex me audistis, testor me non temere neque incerto, sed pure ac sincere verbum Dei mihi concreditum docuisse, cujus iram alioqui tam scirem huic capiti meo jamjam imminere, quam certus sum meos in docendo labores ei non displicuisse. Idque coram Deo et vobis eo libentius testificor, quod minime dubitem Satanam prout consuevit, improbos, leves, vertiginosos denique homines corrumpendæ quam ex me audivistis, sinceræ doctrinæ excitaturum. *Calvini Vit.*

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SERMON

SERMON I.

March 30. 1718.

1 TIM. iii. 15.

—*The* Pillar *and* Ground *of* TRUTH.

THIS Epiſtle was written to Timothy, *that he might know how to behave himſelf in the Houſe of God, which is the Church of the living God.* ver. 14.

In the Old Teſtament theſe two names are applied to different things. *The Houſe of God* was the *Place* he had choſen: firſt the Sanctuary, and then the Temple: *The Church of God* was the *People* whom he had ſet apart for himſelf, the nation which he took out of the midſt of another; theſe the martyr Stephen calls the *Church in the wilderneſs*. But in the New Teſtament the Houſe of God is no other than his Church or People. *He dwells not in temples made with hands.* Every particular believer *is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt;* and a ſociety of them is that *whole Building that grows together into an holy temple in the Lord.* Deut. iv. 3. 4. Acts viii. 38. Acts viii. 48. 1 Cor. vi. 19. Eph. ii. 21.

SERM. I. The connection of the next words (*the Pillar and Ground of Truth*) has disturbed the world with volumes of argument, and rivers of blood. Some Divines think, (and I own myself to be of their opinion), that here the Apostle begins a new sentence, and what is placed at the end of this verse, should be the head of the next; and then we shall read it thus; *The Pillar and Ground of truth is the Mystery of Godliness, which is great without controversy, that God was made manifest in the flesh*, &c. In this view I shall consider the text. But in order to clear the road, I must take some notice of the other opinions that many have contended for; and they are two.

I. That *the Church* is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. Several Protestant authors have explained this notion with a great deal of modesty, and say it signifies no more than that Christians in the New Rom. iii. 2. Testament have the custody of the gospel, as to the *Jews* under the law were committed *the oracles of God*. Or, to express their beloved maxim in their own way, 'There is no truth out of the 'Church.' Others imagine, that as the laws of several countries used to be published on *Pillars* where the people might read them, so the Church Luke i. 1. is to make an open *declaration* of the truth that God has revealed. It is certain that neither of these opinions can be denied: The Churches of Christ 1 Thess. i. have the Bible, and they ought to expose it; *from* 8. *them the word of the Lord is to sound forth.*

But as those terms (*The Pillar and Ground of Truth*) are a noble character of something or other, so there are many who, when they apply it to the Church, suppose a great deal more from it than I can. As, *first*, That the Church is to determine 1 Cor. ii. what is truth and what is error; as if our *faith* 5. *was to stand in the wisdom of men*, and not *in the power of God*. *Secondly*, That the evidence of any truth

truth is owing to the authority of the Church; whereas how great ſoever the Miniſters of the gospel are, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι, though they are accounted to be theſe Pillars, οὐδέν διαφέρει, it makes no odds, *God accepts not the perſon of man; and, thirdly,* That the truth itſelf has no value, if the Church denies her concurrence. So that the belief of the whole Myſtery of Godlineſs ſhall not deliver a man from the brand of hereſy. SERM. I. Gal. ii. 6. 9.

Thus men talk who had rather have the dominion of our faith than be helpers of our joy. A great many other *hard ſayings* are ſqueezed out of theſe words; but it is evident,

1. That by the *Church* in this text, he does not mean only the Miniſters. The word never once carries that ſenſe in all the New Teſtament. *God ſet in the Church apoſtles, prophets, and teachers.* And therefore if *the People,* (who certainly are *the Church*), are *the Pillar and Ground of Truth,* I believe it is more than the managers of this argument ever deſigned to prove by it. 1 Cor. ix. 28.

2. It is far from concluding that one Church is the Pillar of Truth to another. If this character is given of a Church at Epheſus, what has that to do with one at Rome? But,

3. It is plain from all reaſon as well as ſcripture, that Truth is the Pillar and Ground of the Church, and not the Church of Truth. *We are built on the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets;* and it is *in Chriſt* that *the whole building is framed together. We are God's building;* and they who are *wiſe maſter-builders have laid a foundation;* but that is, and can be, no other than *Chriſt.* When this foundation is deſtroyed, the Church falls to the ground; *their Houſe will be left unto them deſolate.* That which compacts a ſociety is, that *our hearts are knit together in love,* and that which it is raiſed upon is, *the acknowledgment of the myſtery.* If the Churches Eph xi. 20, 21. 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10, 11. Col. ii. 2.

SERM. I. Churches depart from the truth as it is in Jeſus,
Rev. iii. 4. the *few* that have *not defiled their garments* ought
1 Tim vi. 5. to *withdraw, and have no fellowſhip with the un-*
Eph. v. 11. *fruitful works of darkneſs.*

II. There are ſome who think that Timothy himſelf has theſe great titles given him. And in relief to their opinion, they ſuppoſe that a particle is wanting in the text; he is exhorted how to behave in the Church ὡς *as the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* This compliment they pay not to his perſon, but to his office. They do not ſay it of him,
2 Tim. ii. 15. 2 Tim iii. 15. becauſe *he knew the ſcriptures*, and *did the work of an evangeliſt, making full proof of his miniſtry, and rightly dividing the word of truth:* Had theſe been the foundations of the character, we could let the names and the merit go together: But the reaſon of their aſcribing theſe noble titles to Timothy is becauſe he was Biſhop of Epheſus, and ſo the glories belong not to the *man* but to the *chair.* They argue that his opinion ought to be deciſive in all matters of faith, from the pre-eminence he had above the reſt of the paſtors. And thus are men ſetting up the ambition which the grace of God pulls down. It is apparent if this is ſaid of Timothy, he that gives him the *name*, gives him in-
Eph. i. 3. ——18. —iv. 16. ſtructions. He *beſought him to abide* at Epheſus; he *committed a charge to him*; he bids him *take heed to himſelf and to his doctrine:* He has left us no room to imagine, that any authority is crowded into theſe titles, or that it ſlides down from Timothy to all his ſucceſſors, let them be never ſo vile and fooliſh, to the end of the world.

I ſhall here enquire into three things:

1. What it is that the Apoſtle calls the *Pillar* and *Ground* of Truth.

2. What the *Truth* is that will be thus ſupported.

3. In

3. In what *ſenſe* we are to underſtand theſe terms of *Pillar* and *Ground*. SERM. I.

1. What is the *thing* that he calls by theſe great names? My anſwer to this will lie in a narrow compaſs (becauſe I have already diſcharged the interpretations that ſome are contending for) by ſhowing you how little reaſon there is to underſtand it of the *Church*, and how much leſs of Timothy; I therefore think that from the end of this verſe he begins a new ſentence. He had ſhowed him in the former part of the chapter what ſort of people *Biſhops* and *Deacons* ought to be; but Ver. 2. 13. ſtill puts him in mind that the main deſign of a Miniſter is to report the glad tidings of ſalvation. The particle Καὶ, AND, in the beginning of the 16th verſe, looks like a continuation of the former ſentence, rather than a freſh diſcourſe. I ſhall therefore underſtand the words in their connection to what comes after; that the *Pillar and Ground of Truth, and the Myſtery of Godlineſs, that is great without controverſy, is, that God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, &c. By this account you will ſee that he ſpeaks of the Chriſtian religion,

1. In general characters,
2. In its main particular branches.

I. The general account that he gives us of it, is under three heads.

1. It is the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; that all uſeful knowledge is raiſed and hung upon it.

2. Notwithſtanding that, it is *myſterious*, and *greatly ſo without controverſy*.

3. It has a tendency to promote and exalt all practical religion; it is *the Myſtery of Godlineſs*. This, he ſays in general of *the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God that was committed to his truſt*. Ch. i. 11.

II.

SERM. I. II. In particular he lets us ſee that Chriſtianity conſiſts in the knowledge of Jeſus: There are ſix articles of the great record:

(1.) His Incarnation, He was *manifeſt in the Fleſh.*

(2.) His Reſurrection, He was *juſtified in the Spirit.*

(3.) His Approbation above, He was *ſeen of Angels.*

(4.) His method of revealing himſelf abroad, He was *preached unto the Gentiles.*

(5.) The ſucceſs of this report, He is *believed on in the world.*

(6.) His reward for the ſervice and ſuffering of Death, He was *received up into glory.*

Theſe are ſo many parts of the knowledge we have of Him, and theſe three characters may be affirmed of them all; *firſt,* That they are the *Pillar and Ground of Truth.* Every other opinion muſt have all its weight laid upon theſe, be conſiſtent with them, and continually referred to them. *Secondly,* There is a *Myſtery* in every one of theſe. You may call the whole a chain of Wonders. We are ſurpriſed as we go along. We could never have known them but by the revelation of the Spirit, who *ſearches all things, yea the deep things of God.* We may place theſe words at the foot of the whole account, *Bleſſed be the God of Iſrael, who only does wondrous things.* And, *thirdly,* They are all of a practical nature. The perſon who receives them with a belief of the Truth, and an aſtoniſhment in the Myſtery, will find the good of them in a life of duty. It is all *according to Godlineſs,* as that takes in both the *worſhip* we pay to God, and the *good works* by which our light ſhines out before men.

Pſal. lxxii. 18.

Ch. vi. 3.

I begin with the firſt general character, of the Chriſtian

Chriſtian religion, and ſhall give you my ſenſe of the words in this propoſition, that SERM. I.

'The Doctrine or Report of Chriſt Jeſus which 'we have in ſcripture, is the Pillar and Ground 'of Truth.'

All other notions are true or falſe, trivial or important, holy or polluted, as they are either concerned with this or remote from it. We want to *know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Here we may enquire what that TRUTH is which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of. And you will eaſily ſee it muſt be confined to things that *accompany ſalvation*, or, as it is ſaid in another place, whatever pertains *to the kingdom of God.* This is the *Grace and Truth that came by Jeſus Chriſt.* Heb. vi. 9. Acts i. 3. Joh. i. 17.

There is *a Truth of Hiſtory* that we take delight in; to know what is doing in diſtant countries, or has been done in former ages: But this is rather our entertainment than our concern.

There is *a Truth of Argument*; this is ſtill more engaging, as it is the proper food of our reaſon. We have a power of thinking, trying, judging and approving; theſe are intellectual joys, *when wiſdom enters into thine heart, knowledge is pleaſant to thy ſoul.*

There is alſo *a Truth of Converſation*; which is what we call integrity. This appears with a beauty to others, and leaves a calmneſs in our own ſouls. It is a ſatisfaction to think that the perſons we deal with, are open and hearty to us, but it is more ſupporting to know that ourſelves are ſo to them. An honeſt man will have greater pain in doing one deceitful action than in receiving an hundred.

Beſides theſe, there are *Truths of Philoſophy*, that have no concern with the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus. A man may either believe or reject them without

SERM. I. any influence on his religion. It is all one to a Chriſtian whether he thinks the earth or the ſun moves. But the Truth that our Apoſtle means, is of another kind.

1. It is about the greateſt concerns.
2. It comes with the fulleſt evidence.
3. It is always the ſame.
4. It is followed with the beſt effects.

1. The whole bulk of *Truth* that ſtands upon the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus, is about the greateſt concerns of human nature. Knowledge and intereſt are thrown together. To be wiſe is to be happy. They are our food. We are *nouriſhed up in the words of faith and of good doctrine; whole-ſome* medicinal *words*, ὑγιαίνοντες. It is *health to the ſoul.*

1 Tim. iv. 6. 2 Tim. vi. 3.

Many of our ſtudies are bare amuſements; and yet with what an appetite do we catch at little probabilities as the ground of a darling opinion? and that about things that will make us never the better, whether we be right or wrong? They give no ſweetneſs to this life and no aſſurance of another. Thoſe learned men are juſtly admired who have ſeen the confuſion of the old philoſophy, and drawn out a more likely ſcheme. But if they could demonſtrate all they ſay, it riſes no higher than to give an entertainment. They may be ſick and poor, vicious and ignorant of God, with all that knowledge. The Epheſians were ſkilled in *curious arts, walking in the vanity of their mind;* but they were *darkened in their underſtandings,* and *alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them.* Indeed an acquaintance with the things of nature may be improved, as by ſome great men it is, to an admiration of the works of God; for *in wiſdom he has made them all.* But thoſe reflections are no part of the learning, nor do they always go along with it.

Acts xix. 19. Eph. iv. 17, 18. Pſal. civ. 24.

Now

Now the Doctrine of Chriſtianity is to acquaint you with the method that God has taken for himſelf to be glorious, and you to be happy. That you may *wait for his Son from heaven, even Jeſus who delivered us from the wrath to come.* SERM. I. 1 Theſſ. i. 10.

You do not read that God was *manifeſt in the fleſh* merely to be acquainted with the ſtory, but that the *love and kindneſs of our Saviour towards man may appear;* to ſhew us how, *according to his mercy, we are ſaved by the waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* All his enemies knew that he was *made of a woman, and under the law,* but our concern in this is to ſee by what method we *are redeemed from under the law, and receive the adoption of ſons.* Tit. iii. 4. —— 5. Gal. iv. 4, 5.

His being *juſtified in the ſpirit,* the teſtimony given to him by the Holy Ghoſt, is more to us than a matter of fact. *We believe in God who raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory.* Theſe are all ſo many articles for the conviction of ſinners, for the quieting of a wounded conſcience, the building up of the weak, and the drawing on to Sion thoſe who have ſet their faces thitherwards, that *we being juſtified by his grace, may have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in whom we have acceſs by faith into the grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* 1 Pet i. 21. Rom. v. 1, 2.

His being *ſeen of Angels,* admired, adored, and obeyed by the armies of heaven, is more than a ſpeculation. In their duty we ſee our own happineſs; we argue from thence, that *his throne is for ever and ever,* and that thoſe who worſhip him will be *miniſtring ſpirits to all the heirs of ſalvation.* Pſal. xlv. 6. Heb. i. 14.

That he was *preached unto the Gentiles* is the means of bringing this ſalvation to us. That he is *believed on in the world* is our comfort; and if we have obtained the *like precious faith,* it is our life. That he was *received up into glory* is a ſecurity to

SERM. I. our hope, for he went *to his Father, and our Father, to his God, and our God;* and *to them that look*
Joh. xx. 17. *for him, He shall appear the second time without sin,*
Heb. ix. 28. *to salvation.*

So that this is *Truth indeed*, not only evident, but important: Here is a doctrine contrived on purpose to let sinners know they are *prisoners of*
Eph. iii. 9. *hope. To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, that from the beginning of the world was hid in God;* that we have our κοινωνία, *fellowship* with, and our *concern* in.

Suppose any ingenious person has his head turned to mathematical studies, he is pleased to find what is in the bowels of the earth, the courses of nature, and the power of engines; but, if he sees that by these things his estate may be improved, if by that study, he is capable of draining his mines, it entertains more than his curiosity. And so it is
1 Cor. ii. 7. here: We do not only speak *the wisdom of God in a mystery*, but *the hidden wisdom that was ordained before the world to our glory.* The knowledge
——— 12. we have by the Gospel is of *things that are freely given to us of God.* We consider his wisdom, his truth, his goodness, and his justice, as they cause their glories to shine out in our redemption. There is no part of this account but what is to make you easy in a world of cares, and happy in a world of
1 Joh. 2. light: For this *Truth dwells in us, and shall be with us for ever.*

2. This Truth comes with the greatest evidence, and that is the Testimony of God himself. We receive it with a veneration to these two attributes; *first*, his *Wisdom*, that he knows the Truth; and,
Deu. xxxii. 4. *secondly*, his *Purity*, that he will tell it. *A God of Truth and without iniquity, just and right is he*;
1 Joh. v. 10. therefore *he who believes not, has made God a liar, because he believes not the record that he has given*
Joh. iii. 33. *of his Son.* But *he that receives his testimony has set to his seal that God is true.*

There

There can be no greater reaſon for aſſenting to any propoſition than this, that God has ſaid it. *The words of the Lord are pure words.* We are to take no man's opinion upon truſt; for they may deceive us: We ſhould bring their reaſon to the bar of our own. But in what the Lord ſaith, there muſt be an acquieſcence, becauſe his knowledge receives no error, and his truth declares none. *Let God be true and every man a liar, that he may be juſtified in his ſayings.* Do not call it the ſubjection and bondage of our minds, or the laying aſide of reaſon. The great employment of that faculty is to enquire whether this is a divine Revelation or not: If it is ſatisfied about that, it has gone far enough. There needs no more; for if I do not believe what I know to be revealed, I reproach the nature of God, who *is not a man that he ſhould lie,* and *in whom is no darkneſs at all.*

SERM. I.

Pſal. xii. 6.

Rom. iii. 4.

Num. xxiii. 19.

1 Joh. i 5.

Still all this while, remember I am ſpeaking of that which you are ſatisfied is *revealed,* not what vain men will call by that name. No doctrine of human invention has any concern in this argument. It *may* be true, but it has not the evidence I am now talking of. The Bereans are commended as *more noble than thoſe of* Theſſalonica, becauſe they would take nothing upon truſt from the very Apoſtles. But then they did not ſet up their own reaſon againſt a divine authority, for *they ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether the things were ſo or not.* If they found the doctrines in the ſcriptures, it was enough; that one thing cloſed up the mind; they never brought the opinion down to reaſon, or examined whether it might be defended that way. The whole diſpute and enquiry ended in this, That if God had ſaid it, they muſt receive it. No matter whether it came within the comprehenſion of their own minds or not. They do not ſet reaſon as a judge upon God, whether he ſpeaks right or wrong.

Acts xvii. 11.

SERM I. wrong. They make no trial of his wiſdom, or his truth. The very examination is profane and impious; it is going beyond the bounds of creatures,

Exod. xix. 21. and *breaking through to gaze:*

If there is ſuch a thing as Revelation, it muſt be the *higheſt evidence* that a doctrine can ever have. All other knowledge leaves us ſhort. We make ſome few diſcoveries, and we gueſs the reſt. Obſervation lays the ground, and conjecture builds upon it. That is as far as any philoſophy can go.

Knowledge and faith are uſually thus diſtinguiſhed. We are ſaid to know things that we either ſee, or that appear to our own reaſon; we *believe* things upon the teſtimony or report of another. Now, it is without any foundation, that people give the preference to the opinions we have by knowledge, above thoſe that come by faith. I can be as fully perſuaded of the truth of a thing by report, as I can by obſervation. I have no more doubt, that there is ſuch a place as Rome, than that there is a city called London, and yet all the evidence I can have of the former is the teſtimony of others. I believe it, becauſe perſons tell me ſo. This principle is admitted into all the buſineſs of life, and ſhall it have no place in religion, where

Tit. i. 1. the report comes from *a God that cannot lie?*

Methinks the Apoſtle was aware that this ſort of reaſoning would creep into the world, and therefore he lays in for it; *If we receive the witneſs of man the witneſs of God is greater, for this is the*

1 John v. 9, 10. *witneſs that God hath teſtified of his Son. He that believes in the Son of God hath this witneſs in himſelf, i. e.* there is ſomething in his reaſon that bears him out in his faith; for he believes it, becauſe God has ſaid it. If I tell you that the moon is ſo much leſs than the earth, and the ſun ſo much larger, that the ſtars move in ſuch an orb or circuit, that the earth turns round, it is very likely

theſe

theſe things are true: Probability is the higheſt that ſort of learning can go. But if ever God had told me any of theſe notions, I ſhould have known them better. Well, it is upon *this* evidence that we ſay *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh:* What we declare to you is τὸ μαρτύριον, the teſtimony of God. Here are *immutable things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lie;* and in theſe you have the *greater conſolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the Hope ſet before you.* SERM. I. Heb. vi. 18.

3. This Truth is always the ſame. There are *divers and ſtrange doctrines*, but Jeſus *is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* The degrees of revelation may vary, as we know they have done. The diſcovery of his purpoſe towards man has been as the *ſhining light;* it burſt out of thick darkneſs at firſt, and when the eye-lids of the morning were open, it ſhone *more and more unto a perfect day.* But ſtill the Speaker and the meſſage are the ſame. He *who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in times paſt unto our fathers, by the Prophets, has in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son.* — xiii. 8, 9. — i. 1.

Whether Chriſt was to be *known* in a Promiſe or in Types, in the Fleſh or in the Spirit, was determined by the ſeveral diſpenſations mankind were under. But, that he was to *come* among us, and work out an eternal redemption, is a doctrine as old as paradiſe. It is no new diſcovery, that mercy was to be glorified in making ſalvation a gift, and juſtice in making it a purchaſe. Adam knew this as well as we, when he was told that the *ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head:* It is the ſame in ſubſtance with what we read afterwards, that *by death he ſubdued him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil.* A faith upon theſe principles was a long-while in the world before what we now call Chriſtianity: By Gen. iii. 15. Heb. ii. 14

this

SERM. I. this Abel *offered to God a more excellent ſacrifice*
Heb. xi. 4. *than* Cain; not merely by fear, love, and duty, but *by faith.*

This perpetuity of an opinion is what no philoſophy can pretend to. Several notions that are now received with credit would have been thought monſtrous in former ages. Nothing can be more oppoſite than the ſyſtems of our learned men and thoſe a thouſand years ago, about the motion of the ſun and the earth. It is certain in this caſe, the things are the ſame; the ſun and the earth took juſt that unvaried courſe then, that they do now; only people have got another way of thinking about them. And perhaps following generations may lay aſide our principles, as we did theirs that have gone before us. Such a floating, rolling, ſhifting thing is human wiſdom.

1 John i. 1. But in religion we declare to you *that which was from the beginning.* This truth has been confeſſed ever ſince God had a people in the world, and ſhall be ſo to the laſt breath of the laſt good man that will cloſe the laſt age of time. For
1 Pet. i. 24, 25. though *all fleſh is as graſs, and the glory of man as the flower of graſs,* it withers and fades away, yet *the word of the Lord endures for ever; and this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.*

Some people tell us that the rules of Church-government alter; and indeed as far as they are human they muſt do ſo; for if men will determine by their own laws, what is decent or expedient, they ſhould remember that *the faſhion of this world paſſes away.* But what God has given us is *for ever.* He has made changes in the methods of his worſhip, but he never made any in the doctrine of redemption. Whether he would be ſerved by ſacrifice and offerings is not to be anſwered without a diſtinction: For as we can tell the time when they were required, ſo we alſo know *in burnt-*

burnt-offerings he has no pleaſure: But it was al- SERM. I.
ways true, that Chriſt ſhould be the Saviour of his people. This was the ſame doctrine before the world began, that it ſhall be after it is ended. For *he was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world unto our glory, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times unto us.* 1 Joh. i. 1. If the old philoſophers were to riſe again, they muſt give their thoughts a new caſt, and unravel the ſchemes which they had laboured with ſo much pain and pleaſure too. But if *righteous* Abel was to live among us, his religion would be juſt the ſame with ours; only he muſt approach to God by a Mediator without a *ſacrifice*, as before he did with one.

4. This truth is attended with the moſt happy influence. There is ſomething in the mind of man that makes it receive a notion with pleaſure according to the degree of evidence. It ſtrikes the ſoul as light does the eye. But of all wiſdom, that which relates to a future happineſs is the moſt refreſhing as well as the moſt important. *Ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.* John viii. 32. It unbinds the ſoul from the captivity of nature. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* 2 Cor. iii. 17. God *ſanctifies us by his truth, for his word is truth.* John xvii. 17. A conviction of this, is like getting out of a dungeon; Iſrael *ſhall cry unto me, My God, we know Thee.* Hoſ. viii. 2.

Indeed it is like all other learning, very mean and inſipid, to thoſe that have it not: But when *the entrance of the word gives light, it makes wiſe the ſimple,* it enlarges the heart, *for it is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he has ſent.* John xvii. 3. This muſt be an exception to what Solomon ſaith, *In much wiſdom is much grief, and he that increaſes learning increaſes ſorrow.* Eccl. i. 18. The reaſon of his maxim is plain, becauſe the things themſelves are *vanity and vexation of ſpirit.* But

when

SERM. I. when we survey the love of God towards men, the redemption that it presses to, the mysterious glory that it is folded in, these are things that will hold when the creation is dashed in pieces. And therefore we may look over them with joy: This will be the grand meditation of heaven:

1 Pet i. 12. For *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, are things that the angels desire to look into.* Therefore an enquiry into them is bringing the work of the presence-chamber into the outer-rooms, and beginning a little before-hand in that which shall be our employment for ever.

April 13. 1718.

SERMON II.

OUR next enquiry is how we are to understand these metaphors, when the doctrine of Christ Jesus is called *the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* There is a great variety of opinions that I meet with upon this head: For when a lively fancy is set at work to make the most of an allusion, we may have particulars enough.

Some think the words refer to *the Pillar of Cloud and Fire*, which were both a protection and a guide to the Jews from Egypt till they came to Canaan. And indeed, that was a type of our Lord's presence with his Church to the end of the world, and of the way that he takes in making known the truth. He *leads us by his counsel*, he

Psal. lxxiii. 24.

keeps

keeps us from falling, and *will preſent us to himſelf with exceeding joy*, as the monuments of a care that is paſt, and the objects of a love that continues for ever. The doctrine of the Goſpel anſwers the end of that moving Pillar, it is *a wall of fire around about us, and the glory in the midſt of us. He creates upon every dwelling place of mount* Zion, *and upon her aſſemblies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory ſhall be a defence.* SERM. 2. Jud. 23, 24. Zech. ii. 5. Iſa. iv. 5.

Others imagine that the Apoſtle had in his eye what they call the *Pillar of Coronation*, which ſtood in the temple near to the place where their kings were crowned. But here the ſenſe of the metaphor comes heavily in, and it is with much ado that theſe annotators apply it to *the day of our Lord's eſpouſals, the day on which his mother crowned him.* 2 Kings xi. 14. Cant. iii. 11.

There is another opinion that looks fairer to our reaſon, that the words refer to the two *Pillars in* Solomon's *Temple*, one of which was called *Jachin*, i. e. *he ſhall eſtabliſh*, and the other *Booz*, *in him*, or *in it*, *is my help:* either of theſe titles may be applied to the intereſt of religion, and the doctrine of the Goſpel. By the articles of truth it appears, that God has *eſtabliſhed his mercy in the heavens. His covenant is ordered in all things and ſure;* and in that is our help: *The Lord has founded* Zion, *and the poor of his people ſhall truſt in it*, in that contrivance. *The foundation of God ſtands ſure, having this ſeal, That he knows them that are his.* This covenant is *all our ſalvation and all our deſire.* 1 Kings vii. 21. Pſal. lxxxix. 2. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Iſa. xiv. 32. 2 Tim ii. 19.

But, *laſtly*, Some think the Apoſtle alludes to the uſe of pillars in the *Heathen temples*, there being a magnificent one at Epheſus. On theſe they wrote their laws, here they painted their gods, and from hence they expoſed the images of their

SERM. 2. great men. The doctrines of the Gospel serve to
Tit. ii. 11, 12. all these purposes. Here we have our laws: *The grace of God that brings salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.* Here also we see as much as we can do of our
Acts vii. 48. —— xvii. 25. God, who *dwells not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped as though he needed any thing:* The design of Christianity is to give us
2 Cor. iii. 4. *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Again, in this Revelation, we have
Heb. xi. 2. —— vii. 1. —— vi. 12. our heroes; *By faith the elders obtained a good report, We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses,* and are *followers of them who through faith and patience do inherit the promises.* Here
Psa. cxii. 6. the righteous are *had in everlasting remembrance.* Whenever the Gospel is preached, the things that they have done are *spoken in memorial of them.*

But, not to vex the metaphor, and lose ourselves in the chase of so many allusions, the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the report we have of him, may be called the *Pillar and Ground of Truth;* as it is the most important of all truths, as it ought chiefly to be contended for, as other truths are built upon it, and have a tendency to it, and as it has the best influence upon the holiness and comfort of our souls.

1. The things laid down in the next verse are the
1 John v. 10, 11. most important of all truths. *It is the record that God has given us of his Son; this is the record, That God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in*
ver. 20. *his Son.* We have all our concern in them. *This is the true God and eternal life.* The question that the Disciples of John the Baptist came with to our Lord, was the greatest that could ever engage
Mat. xi. 3. the thoughts of men, *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* It was with a view to God *manifest in the flesh* that the worthies of the Old

Testament

Teſtament took ſo much pains in going to the Temple, and were at all that expence in journeys and burnt-offerings. *This was the hope of* Iſrael, *to which the twelve Tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and night hoped to come.* For this our Lord came into the world, not merely to explain the law, and be a *ſwift witneſs* againſt his enemies, but to bear his teſtimony that God had ſent him. John *bare witneſs to the truth, and the Father bare witneſs of him,* nor could that people have his word *abiding in them, who believed not in him whom he had ſent.* SERM. 2. Acts xxvi. 7. Mal. iii. 6. John v. 33. —— 37. —— 38.

You ſee that his empire conſiſted in the knowledge of this: When he owns himſelf before Pilate to be a King, he adds, *To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs to the truth; every one that is of the truth hears my voice.* Whatever he ſaid might be called *the truth,* for in his lips was found no guile, but what he gives that title to with all this eminence is the diſcovery that he made of *himſelf.* This is *our report;* the thing we are to carry abroad. When he pleads his very miracles, it is *that we may know and believe that the Father is in him, and he in the Father.* —— xviii. 37. John x. 38.

It is a ſatisfaction to ſee how the word and the providence of God are tallying to one another; that ſo many ages have rolled away between the firſt breath of the promiſe, and the full life of the bleſſing, and yet it all came right. He brought Iſrael out of Egypt 430 *years* after he had promiſed it *to a day.* He reſtored them from Babylon 70 years after the time of their captivity, and gave them *an expected end.* But the coming of that Lord, of *whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write,* is the grand article of his *faithfulneſs, which ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever: He that receives this teſtimony hath ſet to his ſeal that God is true.* Exod. xiii. 41. Joh. i. 45. Pſa. lxxxix. 2. Joh. iii. 33.

He

SERM. 2.

He is called *the Consolation of Israel*, as if they had
Luke ii. 25 *waited* for nothing else. Seeing him was enough. Good old Simeon delivered himself on that occasion like one who had got his fill of life, and had
ver. 29, 30 31, 32. no more to stay for in this world: *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

Gal. iv. 4. The period when this happened is called *the fulness of time*; as if all things in nature and providence had conspired to make that the fittest opportunity, *the due time*, according to which, κατὰ καιρὸν,
Rom. v 6. he came and *died for the ungodly*. Jacob is thought to place too much of his affection upon one son;
Gen xlv 28. when he hears that he is *Lord of Egypt, Is Joseph yet alive, it is enough, I will go down to see him before I die.* He uses the same excess of language
—xlvi. 30. at their meeting: *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face*; as if he thought his life was saved for nothing else but this interview, and that every other mercy would be flat and low after such an entertainment. This perhaps might be criminal in him; but there is no danger in the case before us. We
Tit. iii. 4. cannot overdo it in admiring *the love and kindness of God our Saviour towards man.* He speaks of himself as the great bounty of heaven. Thus saith
Joh. iv. 10 he to the woman of Samaria, *If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* Every thing was the gift of God; Jacob had owned that very *well* to be so, many ages before: but he takes the name in a sense that can never be equalled when it
2 Cor. ix. 15. is applied to any thing else, and we may say, *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.*

2. This is a Truth that we are to contend for.
Psal. xi 3. *If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous*

teous do? There are several doctrines that we deduce from these. Some people see the connection, and others do not. We may dispute with mutual forbearance, and be as ealy to the mistakes of our brethren as we are to their tempers; but an error that saps the foundation, that digs up the Ground of Truth, is not to be endured without letting all tumble into ashes. In this case knowledge and happiness go together. There is an ignorance with which there can be no religion; and therefore when the Apostle Jude gave *all diligence to write about the common salvation, it was needful for him to exhort them that they should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.* SERM. 2. Jude 3.

There are two things that I would observe to you as the matter of this same zeal that he calls for. *First*, That it is not for any thing later than primitive Christianity, a faith *once* delivered to the saints, not to be established upon the authority of future councils. He that is able to receive their dictates, let him receive them, and he that does not like them, may let them alone without any great danger to his soul. And, *secondly*, By this *faith* he means, not every particular doctrine, but the main articles of our Religion. As for example, one thing that Christ revealed was, that there is *nothing unclean of itself; whatever enters into the man does not defile the man, every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving; but, if any man esteems any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* Now, I am not called to contend earnestly with such a one; though I may think him in the wrong, yet I *leave him to his own master;* I am to *receive him, but not to doubtful disputations;* I that *eat, am not to despise him that eats not.* But you will learn what this faith is, by the errors that in the next verse are opposed to it, *turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus* Mat. xv. 11. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Rom. xiv. 14. —— xv. 1. Jude 4.

SERM. 2. *Jesus Christ.* The phrases used here, and in other parts of this epistle, let us see that it is the same case which Peter had spoke of, who tells us of some
2 Pet. ii. 1. who *bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* This is undoing all at once.

Whatever opinion struck at this doctrine, that *God was manifest in the flesh*, is exposed to the horror of the people. They used to run up their ac-
1 John iv. 2, 3. counts of truth to this one point: *Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye heard that it should come, and even now already is in the world.* He had told them
Ch. ii. 18, 19. in a former chapter, *Ye have heard that Antichrist should come, and there are many Antichrists.* He speaks of these as *going out from* them, by which it appears, that they once held communion with the people of God; but there is now a bar between them, a distinction that is never to be made up;
ver. 21. *Ye know the truth and that no lie is of the truth:* The meaning is not, that every good man is above mistakes; but there is a certain error or lie that is opposite to the whole truth of the gospel, and will
——22. be eternally inconsistent with it: *Who is a liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? he is Antichrist that denies the Father and the Son.* He pur-
2 Ep. 7. sues the charge through another epistle; *Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, this is a deceiver and an Antichrist.* Upon this he saith, *Who-*
8, 9, 10. *ever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, has both the Father and the Son; if any man come to you and bring not* this doctrine, *receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.*

So

So that all this while, you see, he is not recommending the private notions of men, nor indeed those truths of God that are of a lower nature; but his titles of *Deceiver* and *Antichrist* are given to those who had shattered the whole frame of Christianity, by taking away the foundation. SERM. 2.

3. Other truths are built upon this, and have their tendency to it. Whatever else we insist on, as part of the counsel of God, yet still we are led hither as the *ground* of all. Ministers have *a dispensation to fulfil the word of God:* The thing that we would *make known* is *the riches of the glory of this mystery*, which is *Christ in you* or among you, *the hope of glory, whom we preach:* In this one verse, ἐν ἔθνεσι is translated *among the Gentiles*, and ἐν ὑμῖν, *in you.* We have no more concern in *the purpose of God*, which he *hid in himself* before the foundation of the world, than as it refers to salvation. For *whom he did foreknow he, predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. He has chosen us in him, that we should be holy;* we obtain an inheritance, being predestinated according to his purpose. Col. i. 26, 27, 28. Rom. viii. 29. Eph. i. 4.

Though it is a true notion that all things are foreseen and appointed by an infinite Mind, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, yet it is all *useless* if you abstract it from religion. God has in our day *made foolish the wisdom of this world.* The same persons have asserted *fatality* in the least actions of life, who deny *predestination* in the great affairs of eternity *. As if God had determined I should move to a coffee-house, or *any other toy-shop*, but had left my getting to heaven as a thing loose from all decrees. Solomon saith in these cases, that *the legs of the lame are not equal.* The parts of

* *Compare the remarks upon the Bishop of Dublin's Sermon with the same* AUTHOR's *late* Discourse upon Liberty. *The former is* Arminianism, *and the latter* Hobbism.

SERM. 2. of the notion are ill matched. What is it to me that every action of my life is fixed, that there is a *neceſſity* upon me to do this thing and not another? Where is the benefit of an opinion that does but intoxicate; a fume of philoſophy that gets into the head and makes us giddy? But take the doctrine of *election* as it ſtands in the Bible,

2 Theſſ. ii. 13. that God has *from the beginning choſen ſome to ſalvation through ſanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*, and it is both the glory of an infinite Agent, and the cordial of a thoughtful creature.

From this ſet of doctrines we argue a great many

Ro. iii. 24. more. How does it appear, that we are *juſtified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, but from this, *that he was*

1 John iii. 8. *manifeſt in the fleſh?* For *to this purpoſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the*

Gal. iv. 4, 5. *works of the devil: He was made of a woman, and under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.* How does the Apoſtle deal with thoſe who denied the reſurrection of the dead, but by reducing that doctrine to one of theſe fundamental principles?

1 Cor. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Thus he argues it out, that *if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you that there is no reſurrection of the dead? but if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen; and if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching in vain and your faith in vain: Yea, we are found falſe witneſſes of God, becauſe we have teſtified of God, that he raiſed up Chriſt, whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not.* You ſee that he brings in the reſurrection of Chriſt as the leading article, and that by which we are to believe our own. Thus we are exhorted to a ſteadineſs

Eph. iv. 14, 15, 16. in the faith, *that we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſlight of men, and cunning craftineſs*

neſs of thoſe who lie in wait to deceive; but ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, who is the Head, even Chriſt, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplies, increaſes to the edifying of itſelf in love. SERM. 2.

4. This Truth has the moſt happy influence upon the ſoul, both as to holineſs and comfort. In *knowing* him, we feel the *power of his reſurrection, the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, and are made conformable to his death.* Phil. iii. 10. This gives us hope in our ſorrow; for, *if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them that ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.* 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. What a company of uſeleſs notions have we contended for? In getting the victory we have only hugged a ſhadow, an imagination, that has no reality or ſubſtance in it. There is a *knowledge that puffs up;* what we gain by it *does not commend us to God.* 1 Cor. viii. 1. ver. 8. But if we know the truth as it is in Jeſus, there is a change goes along with the conviction; we are *renewed in the ſpirit of our minds: Learning Chriſt,* is oppoſed to *committing uncleaneſs with greedineſs.* Eph. iv. 23. ver. 19, 20. His coming in the fleſh, being juſtified in the ſpirit, believed on in the world, and received up into glory, are the moſt powerful arguments to all religion.

The faith we have in ſuch things, *works by love; the love of Chriſt conſtrains us;* the love that runs through the ſeveral ſtages of his action συνέχει ἡμᾶς, it twitches and draws us to itſelf, in a ſort of convulſion that we cannot reſiſt: And what is it that gives the love of Chriſt all this power over us? *becauſe we thus judge, that if one died then were all dead, and that he died, that they who live ſhould not live unto themſelves, but to him that died for them and roſe again.* 2 Cor. v. 14. ver. 15. 2 Cor. v. 15. The doctrine is, that Chriſt died: Every one knows that; but from this he ſcatters the ſeeds of humility and reſolution. Firſt, The

SERM. 2. argument runs backward, that *if he died for all, then were all dead;* it ſhews us to be in a ſtate of guilt and danger, miſerable, and like to continue ſo; and then it leads on our thoughts forwards, to the end he had in dying, *that they who live*, who are fetched into life by him, ſhould uſe it, *not to themſelves, but to him who died for them and roſe again.* Thus we are *nouriſhed up in the words of faith and ſound doctrine. Do not my words do good, ſaith the Lord, to him that walks uprightly?* And is not his word as *a hammer and a fire that breaks the rock in pieces?* This report has melted and moulded the hearts of men. As it is a *faithful ſaying*, ſo the Holy Ghoſt makes it *worthy of all acceptation.*

1 Tim. iv. 6.
Mic. ii. 7.
2 Tim. i. 15.

Some notions that are ingrafted upon the Chriſtian religion, have none of this vital virtue. *Their ſtock is a doctrine of vanities.* The opinions that are raiſed up *by men of corrupt minds*, do no manner of good; they want the influence that we feel in all the *myſteries of Godlineſs.* I will give you but one inſtance, and that is from the notion of TRANSUBSTANTIATION. If you examine it impartially, you will find it as *uſeleſs* as it is *abſurd.* If it were true, it would do no good. My ſoul is concerned to know that *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, but not that he is manifeſt in the *bread.* His taking upon him my nature was needful, that *by death he might ſubdue him that had the power of death, that is the devil:* And thus *he delivers thoſe who through fear of death, are all their lifetime ſubject to bondage.* But it adds nothing to this victory that I ſhould eat his *body*, every time that I remember his *death.* My believing that his fleſh and blood are both in heaven and earth, may prove that my head has got a *monſtrous* turn, but not that it has got a *holy* one. I have as many arguments for my duty and hope, if the bread is *not* changed, as

Heb. ii. 14.

I

I can have if it *is*. So that here is a *myſtery* and a *miracle* thrown away upon me. My ſenſes cannot *receive* it, and my faith does not *need* it. The doctrine of redemption, which is the ground of my aſſurance, is complete without it. If Chriſt, inſtead of ſaying, This is my body, had ſaid, This is a repreſentation or memorial of my body, he had left me no way deficient either in my holineſs or my comfort. I may believe (as we ſee by the lives of thoſe that pretend to it) that the bread is changed into the body of Chriſt, and yet be never the better for it. It is no ſecurity againſt my *eating the bread unworthily*, and becoming *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*. To believe that he really gave himſelf for me, is a faith that carries all proper virtue along with it; *the life that we live, is by this faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himſelf for us*. But to believe that a prieſt *now* gives him *to us*, ſignifies nothing at all; it is to believe an impertinence. That ſort of receiving him, if it was really his body, does not make us ſaints, unleſs every one that has taken the ſacrament, is undoubtedly ſaved. My concern is about a ſpiritual feeding, that I am partaker of him by faith, and find that, to my ſoul, *he is meat indeed, and drink indeed*. If I have this, I do not want his body; and if I have it not, the change of the bread into the body, makes it only *a carnal ordinance*; and with reference to this it may be ſaid, *that the fleſh profits nothing*.

SERM. 2.

Gal. ii. 20.

Thus you ſee the Doctrine of Chriſt in the FIRST of theſe divine characters; it is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. It is alſo in the ſecond *a Myſtery*; and in the third the Principle, the Argument and Direction of all *Godlineſs*, as we may hereafter ſhow: But this part of my ſubject ſhould not be diſmiſſed without an APPLICATION.

1. If

SERM. 2.

1. If this is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, it is pity that it ſhould be corrupted; that we cannot have the great articles of our Religion delivered in the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. The Myſtery of Godlineſs as the Holy Ghoſt reveals it, looks very great and awful; but it only tends to *darken counſel by words without knowledge*, when men have frothed up the heads of doctrine in barbarous terms. *The trumpet* ought not to give *an uncertain ſound.* That Chriſt is in the Father, and the Father in him, though it conveys to my ſoul *a knowledge that is high, and I cannot attain unto it*, yet the words are eaſy to be underſtood. There is a great plainneſs of ſpeech, though a depth of wiſdom. But to ſay he is 'Light of 'Light, God of God, very God of very God, is a 'twirl of words that does not appear ſo full of 'majeſty.' We ſay of the doctrine and language of Scripture, as Solomon does in another caſe, that it is *ſoundneſs in the fleſh*; but phraſes fetched from the Mother of Harlots, will be *rottenneſs in the bones.*

2. If this is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, what expectations can we have from thoſe that oppoſe it? *Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid*, Jeſus Chriſt. What ſorts of people God may uſe in the cauſe of liberty we cannot tell; He is a ſovereign Agent in the whole courſe of providence; but it is not likely they ſhould be the pillars of a nation, who are doing their utmoſt to deſtroy thoſe of Chriſtianity. When our Lord takes to himſelf *his great power and rëigns*, he will ſuit his tools to his work. *The ſalvation of Iſrael* ſhall no longer be fetched from afar, but come at once *out of Zion. He raiſes up the poor out of the duſt, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to ſet them among the princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars*

1 Cor. iii. 11.

Rev. xi. 17.

Pſal. xiv. 7.

1 Sam. ii. 5

of

of the earth are the Lord's, and he has ſet the world upon them. SERM. 2.

What a connection this has with the glory of a Redeemer, you will ſee from the 47th Pſalm, which is written on purpoſe to celebrate his aſcenſion, *The Lord is gone up with the ſound of the trumpet.* Pſ. xlvii. 5. As one of the beauties of that day, when this ſhall be better known, he cloſes thus, *The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abram; for the ſhields of the earth belong unto God, and he is greatly exalted.* ver. 9. It was by faith in this, and it muſt be ſo again, that *they ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, quenched the violence of fire, put to flight the armies of the aliens, and out of weakneſs were made ſtrong.* Heb. xi. 34.

What we call bravery, without theſe impreſſions, is but like the ruſhing of the horſe into the battle; and if ſuch a one falls, he *dies as a fool dies:* he goes to an unknown God. But the Chriſtian *knows in whom he has believed.* He overcomes, even in a defeat, *by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his teſtimony, and he loves not his life unto the death.* Rev. xii. 11. There is but little hope in a time of danger from thoſe who *bend their tongues like their bow for lies, but are not valiant for the truth upon earth; they proceed from evil to evil, and know not God.* Jer. ix. 3. Our confidence is quite diſſolved when theſe call themſelves the friends of liberty; inſtead of truſting them, we muſt *take heed every one of his neighbour, and not truſt in any brother; for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will walk with ſlanders; they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth; they have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and weary themſelves to commit iniquity.* ver. 4, 5.

See more of this in a Sermon entitled *The Nature of Faith*, November 5, 1721.

SER-

May 11. 1718.

SERMON III.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

Without Controverſy, great is the MYSTERY *of Godlineſs.*

WE are now to conſider the *ſecond character* that the Apoſtle gives us of the Chriſtian Religion; that though it is *true*, and a proper object of our belief, yet it is nevertheleſs MYSTERIOUS. Thus we find it ſuited to the three employments of the human ſoul. *Firſt*, It is the matter of our *faith*, what we receive and depend upon: *Secondly*, Of our *wonder*, what we are filled and amazed with: And, *thirdly*, Of our *practice*, working itſelf out into life and duty. The firſt of theſe belongs to that which is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth;* the ſecond, to that which God himſelf has called a *Myſtery;* and the third, to a doctrine that is *according to Godlineſs*. It is made on purpoſe to form our behaviour, and give us a holy turn of heart and life towards all the revealed will of God.

I have already conſidered this noble chain of doctrines as they are *true;* I am now to take a view of them under another title, as they are *myſterious*. This character, as well as the former, belongs

belongs to all the particulars of our Religion; to the *manifeſtation* that God made of himſelf in the Fleſh, to his being juſtified in the Spirit, the regard that was paid him by the Angels, the diffuſion of his name through the *world* by *preaching*, his inward empire in the hearts of the Gentiles who *believe* in him, and the fulneſs of his reward, as he was *received into glory*. Theſe are all myſteries. Though we *believe the report* that is given us concerning them, yet they cannot fail to raiſe our hearts, and leave us in a ſecret confuſion. There is ſomething in every one of them that exceeds the reaſon of man, and yet allures it. We are loſt in delightful mazes, that are neither to be denied nor comprehended. The *Mercy* of our God *is in the heavens, and his Faithfulneſs reaches to the clouds; his Righteouſneſs is like great mountains, and his Judgments are a great deep.* SERM. 3. Pſa. xxxvi. 5, 6.

There are three words in this part of the verſe. *Firſt*, That this is a *Myſtery; ſecondly*, That it is a *great* one; and, *thirdly*, That it is ſo *without controverſy*. I ſhall take them in their order, and ſo, at preſent, engage my thoughts and yours upon that auguſt and mighty name that is given to the whole doctrine of the Goſpel, which I will convey to you in this propoſition, that

'The report we have of Chriſt Jeſus in the 'New Teſtament, is all a MYSTERY.'

What this report is, and how myſterious it appears to be, I may ſhow you through the ſeveral branches into which the diſtribution is made. At preſent I ſhall only conſider the character in a general way, under the following heads:

1. Give ſome account what a myſtery is.
2. Show you that the myſterious part of any doctrine does not hinder it from being true.
3. Enquire

SERM. 3. 3. Enquire into the reaſons why God has revealed myſteries in the Chriſtian Religion.

I. We muſt look into the meaning of the expreſſion: what it is the Apoſtle would have us conceive of our Religion when he calls it a *Myſtery*. I am altogether of their opinion who think, that in this word, he alludes to that which was either the *glory*, or the vanity of other religions.

Firſt, It is well enough known that the prieſts among the Heathen held the people in ſuſpence, and led them into a fooliſh veneration, by pretending to have certain ſecrets in their own keeping, which the vulgar were not to know. By that craft they had their wealth. It was the trade of the tribe. They talked as if the gods had given them a patent for hoarding up the great bulk of myſtery, and retailing it out at their own pleaſure.

Rom. i. 21. Jer. li. 17. Thus they became *vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened. Every man was brutiſh by his knowledge, his molten image was falſehood.* They rendered themſelves *the rulers of the darkneſs of this world.* Now for theſe devotions the city of Epheſus had been the moſt famous:

Acts xix. 15. They were *worſhippers of the great goddeſs* Diana, *and the image which fell from* Jupiter.

Therefore the Apoſtle furniſhes Timothy with an anſwer to all the enthuſiaſm of the people among whom he lived. They valued their religion for myſteries, for unintelligible glories; and ſo may we do ours. Not, in the crafty and mercenary way that they did. Our myſteries are not kept as the property of the prieſts, but ſcattered and given out in an open manner, that every one may

Eph. iii. 4. read them. He tells the Epheſians, that *when they read they might underſtand his knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The Jews had myſteries in their religion. David deſires that God would teach him *the wonders of his law*. Their duty was commonly wove into their hope. Their obedience was partly moral and partly ceremonial. Theirs was *the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the promiſes*. God *dealt not with any other nation* as he did with them. Their ſervice, the fire in their temple, the cloud that ſometimes filled it, the ſtrange protection which they ſaw about it, was all a myſtery. Their figures of the mercy-ſeat above the ark, and the cherubims above that, ſhading it with their wings, poring upon it with inquiſitive looks; theſe were among the *wonderful works that he made to be remembered*. SERM. 3. Rom. ix. 4. Pſa. cxlvii. 20. Pſal. cxi. 4.

Now the Apoſtle, who always endeavoured to vindicate the reputation of the Goſpel, would ſcarce neglect it here. Timothy's father was a Greek, and his own education had been among them, as appears from his *not being circumciſed* till he was grown up; but his mother and grandmother were both Jews, and read the ſcriptures. He therefore lets him know, that what they ſo juſtly admired in the Jewiſh religion, was outdone in the Chriſtian; though the *figures* of a Saviour with which they uſed to converſe were myſterious, yet the *life* itſelf, in the fleſh, in the ſpirit, and in his glory, was a great deal more ſo. Therefore, you may take the deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe two poſitions: It was to ſhow the preference of our revelation, *firſt*, To the conceit of the Gentiles; and, *ſecondly*, To the peculiar of the Jews. It had all *that*, which the one pretended to in vain, and which the other poſſeſſed in a lower degree. For *without controverſy great is the myſtery of Godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, &c. Acts xvi. 3. 2 Tim. i. 5.

There have been debates about the meaning of the word. Some would gladly have us believe,

SERM. 3 that it ſignifies no more than what is eaſily comprehended; and that any truth, though it lies the moſt open to your underſtanding, may go by that name. But this is throwing all language out of the world, and leaving us uncertain about the ſounds that we hear. If a myſtery is not ſomething out of the common way, I do not know what occaſion we have for the word itſelf; and yet it is frequently uſed in the New Teſtament, which would never have been done, if the Apoſtle had not deſigned to give us ſome greater appre-
1 Cor. ii. 7. henſions of what he calls by that title. *We ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom, which he has ordained before the world to our*
—— 10. *glory.* Theſe are called afterwards *the deep things of God.*

I ſhall not trouble you with derivations of the word, which all ſides are agreed in; but I take it to include theſe four things, as it is applied to the doctrines of Religion; it is ſecret, important, it could never have been known but by Revelation, and there is ſomething in it above the comprehenſion of our reaſon.

1. A MYSTERY is ſomething kept ſecret, locked up from the view of men. This ſenſe of it agrees to the doctrines of Chriſtianity upon a threefold account:

1. As they were concealed from former ages.
2. As they are yet ſo from the greateſt part of the world.
3. As they continue ſo in ſome degree to God's own people.

(1.) They were kept ſecret from former ages. Thus we are expreſsly told, that this wiſdom of God in a myſtery was *not made known to the ſons*
Eph. iii. 5. *of men.* The Doctrine was *hid from ages and generations, kept ſecret ſince the world began,* that is now

now manifeſt and *revealed by the writings of the prophets, and made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.* The people of God in the old times had general hopes, looſe and tranſient views. *Abraham ſaw the day of Chriſt and was glad; David being a Prophet knew that God would, of the fruit of his loins, raiſe up Chriſt to ſit upon his throne. Iſaiah ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.* This was, in all generations, the *hope of Iſrael.* And yet it was but little they ſaw or knew, in compariſon of later viſions. We have *life and immortality brought out* into a better light. They preſſed in vain to our diſcoveries; *Many kings and righteous men deſired to ſee the things that ye ſee, and have not ſeen them; and to hear the things that ye hear, and have not heard them. They all died in faith,* but *they had not received the promiſes, God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they without us ſhould not be made perfect.* They were conſcious of the imperfection of their knowledge, as you may collect from what the woman of Samaria told our Lord: *We know that the Meſſiah comes, and when he is come, he will teach us all things.* When John the Baptiſt had his prophetical ordination, he was to *go before the face of the Higheſt, to give the people the knowledge of ſalvation in the remiſſion of their ſins, whereby the day-ſpring from on high would viſit them.* Chriſt himſelf was *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Iſrael.* John was the greateſt of thoſe who were born of women, and yet *he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*

SERM. 3.
Rom. xvi. 25, 26.
John viii. 56.
Acts ii. 30.
Joh. xii. 41.
2 Tim. i. 10.
Heb. xi. 40.
Joh. iv. 25.
Luke i. 76, 77, 78.
—— ii. 32.

There was ſomething in their very privileges that let them know the right convictions were not yet come. Their cuſtom of attending the ſanctuary was in ſuch a manner, that *the Holy Ghoſt ſignified thereby, that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt.* It was but *a figure for the*

Heb. ix. 8.

SERM. 3. *the time preſent;* and the ſervice which *ſtood in*
Heb. ix. 9, 10. *meats and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances,* was *impoſed on them only till the time of reformation.* Thus we find it was in fact; for when the Son of Man came, he found no faith in the earth; they were loſt in the prophecies that
Acts xiii. 27. related to him; for *though the Prophets were read every Sabbath-day, they underſtood them not, but fulfilled them by condemning him.* Therefore, *we*
1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. *ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, which none of the princes of this world knew,* men of the higheſt figure in the Jewiſh Church; *for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*
Gal. iii. 23. They were *ſhut up, under the law, to the faith that ſhould afterwards be revealed.*

The Apoſtle compares the two diſpenſations to the two different ages of childhood and maturity. A child is really poſſeſſed of the human nature; he has an immortal ſoul, rational faculties, and is a being of the ſame ſort with a perſon grown up: But how looſe are his reaſonings! though the ſubſtance of his opinion may be right, yet the manner of conducting it, is very im-
1 Cor. xiii. 11. perfect. Thus ſaith the Apoſtle, *When I was a child, I thought as a child, I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child.* This he ſaith of his ſtate in the Jewiſh religion, in which he had *profited above many his equals in his own nation:* There was a notorious infancy in their whole profeſſion. *But,* ſaith he, *when I became a man, I put away childiſh things.* He judged of the ſame ſubjects in another way.

Thus was the doctrine of our religion a myſtery.
Iſa. ix. 6. The firſt name that Chriſt is called by is *Wonderful.* The great wonders that are now diſcovered, at that time were kept hid, covered and vailed.
2 Cor. iii. 13. *So that the children of Iſrael could not look to the end of thoſe things that were to be aboliſhed;* and *this vail is done away in Chriſt. The heir, as long*

as he is a child, differs nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors till the time appointed of the father: Even ſo we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fulneſs of time came, God ſent forth his Son. SERM. 3. 2 Cor iii. 14. Gal. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

(2.) Theſe things are ſtill kept ſecret from the greateſt part of mankind. I do not only mean the heathen who know not God, but the inhabitants of thoſe countries where the Goſpel has come. Our Saviour tells one of his diſciples, *To you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom, but to them in parables, that hearing they may hear, and not underſtand, and ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive.* This diſtinction that the goodneſs of God has made between ſome and others, is what He affirms with hearty praiſes: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes; even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* Thus the Apoſtle purſues the obſervation, *We are a ſweet ſavour of God to them that believe and to them that periſh; to the one we are a ſavour of life unto life, to the other of death unto death.* The ground of this difference is not only in their will, but their apprehenſions: *We preach Chriſt Jeſus, and him crucified, to them that periſh fooliſhneſs, but to thoſe that are ſaved, both Jews and Greeks, the wiſdom of God, and the power of God.* He lets us be aſſured that *the natural man*, by whom he does not underſtand a perſon vile in his morals, but one left to the conduct of his natural reaſon, *receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can be know them, for they are fooliſhneſs to him, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* Matt. xi. 25, 26. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. 1 Cor. i. 23. —— ii. 14.

The people who deny that Chriſtianity is a myſtery, do plainly prove it; becauſe it is locked up from them: *Our Goſpel is hid to thoſe that are loſt; the* 2 Cor. iv. 3.

SERM. 3. *the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ* does not
2 Cor. iv. 4. *shine into their hearts, but the god of this world has blinded the eyes of those that believe not.* We see with how much equity our religion may go by this name. The learning of persons laughs at it, their
Tit. i. 15. corruptions war against it. *To the unbelieving there is nothing pure, but their mind and conscience are defiled*; both the faculty that should receive the evidence of truth, and that which should make im-
1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. pressions of *duty. To them that believe, Christ is precious; but to them that be disobedient, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: They stumble at the word, whereunto they are appointed.*

(3.) They are a secret, even to God's own peo-
1 Cor. xiii. 19. ple; they *know but in part*, and so *prophesy in part.* God has indeed opened the eyes of their understanding in the revelation of himself; but *how little a portion do they hear of him!* We have the means
Eph. iv. 12, 13. of grace, *Pastors and Teachers for edifying of the body of Christ*; but we are not yet *come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to the fulness of the stature of Christ, to the measure of a perfect man.* The substantials of the truth are as much as we can expect, that we be not *like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.* The more we know, the more we need; not as
Phil iii. 12, 13. though we had *already attained, or were already perfect; but we follow after, if we may apprehend that for which we are also apprehended of Christ Jesus: Nay, we count not ourselves to have apprehended.*

The discoveries reserved to another world, are laid down in those terms that shew their transcen-
1 Joh. iii. 2. dency to every thing here below. We are to *see Christ as he is*; as if all the representations we have of him now, were some way wrong or untrue. We
1 Cor. xiii. 12. shall see him *face to face, and know as ourselves are known*; as if all we had now was but hearsay; and indeed it is no more: *For we walk by faith*

(which

(which comes by hearing) *and not by ſight.* When SERM. 3.
we have gone as far as time and ſtudy can carry us, we ſtill ſee there are vaſt important themes yet untouched. The *Temple of God* is not to be opened till we get to heaven, and there we ſhall *ſee the* Rev. xi. 19.
ark of his Covenant. Upon theſe accounts it may be ſaid, *our Goſpel is hid*; it was ſo to the Jews, it is ſo to thoſe that are loſt; and, in part, it is ſo to the believer himſelf; and therefore it may be called a Myſtery.

1. It is called a Myſtery from its importance. Several things are kept ſecret which it would do us no good to know. It is not worth the while to take off their vail. Many of the heathen diſcoveries were impertinent and empty, and ſo are all human inventions that have crouded into Chriſtianity. Abundance of that ſort of learning that men admire is hard to come by, and worth nothing when we have it. But what God calls a Myſtery is compared to *a garden incloſed, a ſpring ſhut up,* Can. iv. 12.
a fountain ſealed: Things that are made both for neceſſity and delight. It is *a wiſdom ordained be-* 1 Cor. ii. 7.
fore the world to our glory.

Mahomet pretended to have revelations from his *pigeon*, and do wonders upon his *aſs*; but what do they all amount to! The miracles in the *Popiſh* hiſtories are ridiculous. We muſt not engage the power of God in trifles and childrens play. But the name of a *Myſtery* as it ſtands in the New Teſtament, calls up our veneration for the thing it belongs to. Theſe doctrines are *hid with Chriſt in* Eph. iii. 9.
God, they are numbered among the endearments of eternity; they were the delight and ſweet counſel that the Father and the Son took together. What is it that the Apoſtle gives the name to in our text, but the courſe of a Redeemer from glory to glory again! The value of his Perſon, the extremity of his Suffering, the merit of his Atonement, the extent

SERM. 3. tent of his Empire, the effect of his Gospel, and the fulness of his Reward! These are not only great in themselves, being the history of *a God*, an account of his journey from a Throne to a Cross, and from thence to a Crown; but they are *our own concern*. This is what we *flee to, as the hope that is set before us*. It is not a trifling or a foreign mystery; but by these mazes of divine love we are
1 Pet. i. 3. trained up, and brought on to *the inheritance re-*
Tit. iii. 4. *served in heaven for us*. It is *the love and kindness of God our Saviour that appears towards men*.

2. It is called a Mystery, because it never could have been known, but by Revelation. Had not God himself made the great disclosure, we must have remained for ever ignorant of it. The Apostle tells us, it is shut out from all the avenues of
1 Cor. ii. 9. knowledge. *Eye hath not seen it*, Nature shows nothing of redemption; *the depth saith, it is not in me, and the sea saith, it is not with me: Ear has not heard it;* angels would never have told the secret; the whole world was silent upon that head: *Neither could it enter into the heart of man;* we could not have formed any conception or scheme within ourselves; we were not able to give it that poor sort of life that we do to a project in our own imaginations, if God had not *revealed it to us by his Spi-*
Rom. ix. 23. *rit. He made known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy*. This is a Mystery; a Truth that we could never have thought of, and must receive from no other than God himself.

This account you may carry along with you through all the particulars of our religion. Who could ever have started the design that God should be *manifest* in the flesh? that he should come down, and not only live among us, but die for us? that he should rise again to the esteem of another world, and afterwards plant an empire in this? These things might have lain in the folds of the decree,

in

in the ſame infinite Mind that formed them, if God himſelf had not made them known in the Holy Scriptures. SERM. 3.

3. A MYSTERY is ſomething above the comprehenſion of our reaſon. *The things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.* Reaſon is employed about the evidence, whether God has ſaid it or not; but it quietly reſigns the reſt to faith. We receive the doctrines unexplained, there is a part in them that we do not underſtand; but if they are revealed they will be admired; and though ſome tell us that to confeſs a Myſtery in our religion, is to give up the glory of it, yet I am no more aſhamed of the wonders of the Goſpel, than I am of the ſcandal that attends it, deſiring to *preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* And this leads me to 1 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. iii. 8.

II. Shew that the Myſtery of any doctrine does not hinder it from being true. It is no objection againſt Chriſtianity that there are things in it beyond the graſp of reaſon. *We ſee through a glaſs darkly.* This does not make it a heap of enthuſiaſm, a piece of prieſtcraft in thoſe that deliver it, or a blind implicit faith in them that receive it, as you will ſee by the following particulars: 1. The difficulty or eaſineſs of a doctrine, does not make it the matter of our faith, but we go entirely upon the ſufficiency of the evidence. 2. This obtains in every part of life, and it is ſtrange we ſhould exclude it from religion. 3. It is no way unaccountable that the nature and the deſigns of God ſhould be incomprehenſible to us. 4. It is neceſſary that our underſtanding ſhould honour the Revelation of God by a ſubjection, as well as our wills by a compliance. 5. Theſe are not myſteries of man's forging, but we have them in the Book of God 6. They are not concealed by any party or tribe among us, but lie open to be ſeen and read of all men. There-

SERM. 3. fore, 7. The design of preaching them, is not to set up the tyranny of priests, but to lead people to a veneration for their God, a dependence upon him, and an application to him.

1. It is no argument against Christianity that it is a Mystery, because our believing of any thing is not at all concerned in the difficulty or easiness of a proposition, but in the sufficiency of the *evidence* upon which it comes. Timothy was to *continue in the things he had learned and been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them.*

2 Tim. iii. 14.

We must distinguish between Knowledge and Faith. Knowledge is the opinion that we have, either from the observations of our senses, or the conclusions of reason: But Faith is the apprehension that is raised in us by the testimony of another; and therefore, in that case, we have no farther concern than in the wisdom and veracity of him that reports it. As, for example, suppose any traveller should tell us the strange and barbarous customs they have among the Indians; the employment of the mind upon that occasion is not, whether these practices are right, or whether we could have imagined them, but whether this man really knows what he tells, and tells what he knows. If we are satisfied that he is not deceived by others, nor we by him, we take the story though it is never so unaccountable. We do not examine the folly or stupidity of the action, but the validity of the witness, and so may be said most heartily to believe what we as thoroughly condemn. Now, in the case before us, we have the report upon the highest evidence: Whatever God tells us must be true, whether we comprehend it or not, for these two reasons: First, Because *he is light, and in him is no darkness at all,* he cannot be mocked; and, secondly, *He is a God of truth, and without iniquity,* he cannot deceive.

Where

Where is the difference between believing a *Myſtery* and receiving a *Prophecy?* Our reaſon can reach to neither of them; they are equally beyond the comprehenſion of that faculty. When God told Abraham he ſhould be *the father of many nations*, he had as much ground to doubt of that, as we have of any doctrine in the Chriſtian Religion. But *he ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; he believed in hope, and againſt hope, accounting that he was able to do what he had promiſed.* Not that he knew the way *how*. He ſaw there were ſeveral objections againſt it, but theſe he drowns in a veneration for Omnipotence. *He conſidered not his own body, now dead*; *that* would have rendered ſuch an expectation impoſſible; but when God was to do it, he knew it would paſs; for he that could raiſe the dead, had a right to *call the things that are not as though they were.* Should we not all of us have condemned Abraham, had he not thus received the promiſe? Should we not have ſaid of him as the angel did of Sarah, *Wherefore did ſhe laugh? is any thing too hard for the Lord?* Unbelief to ſuch a word as this, muſt have the ſoul of atheiſm in it, and proceed from our thinking God to be ſuch an one as ourſelves. An unbeliever gives no other reaſon why God cannot do it, than this, that *we* cannot.

SERM. 3.

Rom. iv. 18, 19.

Well, he expects from us the ſame veneration for his *knowledge* that Abraham gave to his *power*. *O the depth of the riches of the wiſdom of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* Why do not we receive a Myſtery, but becauſe we do not underſtand it? And how comes this to be a reaſon againſt it, unleſs we judge that God knows no more than we do; that becauſe a thing is inconceivable by us, it muſt be ſo to him?

Rom xi. 33.

If he has really told us, *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy*

SERM. 3. *Holy Ghoſt, and that theſe three are one;* if he has ſaid that *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, we have as much reaſon to believe that, as Ezekiel had that the people ſhould return to their own land. The difficulty of the caſe does not throw it out of our faith, becauſe it is a God that ſpeaks it; no more than it threw the promiſe out of their hope, becauſe it was a God that ſhould perform it. And if we put the queſtion upon this doctrine, it is but the ſame that God himſelf did upon the deſign, *Son of man, can theſe dry bones live?* If nature, if reaſon, was to anſwer, it would ſay No; but he re-
Eze. xxxvii. 11, 12. turns God's queſtion as we muſt do our own, *O Lord, thou knoweſt.* Is it poſſible that three Perſons ſhould be in one nature, and two natures in one Perſon? we may ſay, The Lord knows. But if he has revealed it, faith has evidence enough. Do not ſay this makes Religion no more than a reverend blindneſs, that it is a ſealing up of the underſtanding; for,

2. This ſort of faith obtains in every part of life, and it is ſtrange that we ſhould deny it in
1 John v. 9. Religion. *If we have received the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater which he hath given of his Son.* Thus it is in all practice. We reſign ourſelves at ſea to the conduct of others, though to us it is all a myſtery that people ſhould know their road, and diſtance from places, by the ſtars. But would it not be very weak for us to ſay there is no ſuch thing as naval learning, merely becauſe we ourſelves have it not? If a perſon, whoſe ſkill and veracity I have no doubt of, ſhould tell me he has ſeen or made an engine that by the moving of a finger ſhould lift up a tun, the thing itſelf is what I can neither contrive nor imagine, and yet upon my opinion of the man I ſhould eaſily believe it.

This

This principle runs through the world; there could be no living, if people were not as ſatisfied in what others tell them, as in what they ſee themſelves. And, what! muſt God alone be out of credit with us! Shall a report be to us *the evidence of things not ſeen* in ten thouſand caſes, and muſt it have no place in Religion? May it not be ſaid in this caſe, *O houſe of Iſrael are not your ways unequal?* Remember our Goſpel is revealed by Him who can neither receive a deluſion, nor give one. *His eyes are as a flame of fire,* and *deceit is an abomination to his lips.* It is upon this evidence that we believe: Infinite Wiſdom, and Eternal Truth. SERM. 3.

SERMON IV.

May 25. 1721.

3. IF any thing is incomprehenſible to us, it muſt be the nature of an infinite God, and the awful deſigns of his will. Now this is the Myſtery of the Goſpel; it gives us the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God,* ἐν προσώπῳ, *in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.* His *mercy* to ſinners *is in the heavens; his faithfulneſs* to the ſaints, *above the clouds; his righteouſneſs is like the great mountains.* Why ſhould it be a thing incredible or ſhocking to human reaſon, that there is a depth in this doctrine that it cannot reach? Do not the common notions we have of Him that made the world tell us, that *we cannot by ſearching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher than heaven, what can we know? deeper than hell, what can* 2 Cor. iv. 6. Pſal. xxxvi. 5, 6. Job xi. 7, 8, 9.

SE RM 4. *can we do? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.* These apprehensions diffuse themselves through all our sentiments
Job xxxvii. 23. of a God. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.*

If his decrees are to be explained, or his nature comprehended, he is not equal to an adoration; he is become too little for our *reverence and Godly fear.* Our esteem for him is upon the ground of
1 Tim. i. 17. those perfections, that *he is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.* We are forced to make use of these negatives for want of thoughts and words that are commensurate to the subject. There is something in the attributes of *never-beginning* and *never-ending* that leads us out of our depth. We are lost in our conceptions of a Being
Psal. xc. 2. that is *from everlasting to everlasting;* and yet, is it not the highest reason that we should in this
Col. i. 17. manner judge of Him who *is before all things, and by whom all things consist?* In the Mystery of Godliness we consider his justice, his purity, his goodness, and his power, as combining all their glories, and making them appear together: And, if there is any truth in the matter, it must be incompre-
Ps. cxxxix. 6. hensible. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it.*

We look upon this whole contrivance as a thing that was laid long before the execution. The Scripture gives us the date of it, from before the foundation of the world: And are those counsels to be settled and unfolded by creatures *of yesterday?* Do we suppose that God lived without any designs? and, if he had them, must it not be in a way transcendent to all the enquiries of men? Can any thing be more agreeable and certain than
Deut. xxix. 29. that *secret things belong to God, and things revealed unto us?* Does he not speak like himself, when he
Isa. lv. 8, 9. saith, *My thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways*

ways as your ways? And is not the compariſon laid within all the bounds of modeſty, that as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are his ways and thoughts above ours? SERM. 4.

If there is a God, and he has formed any purpoſe within himſelf, it muſt be of a bulk and depth that we are not able to take within our compaſs. *The ſecrets of wiſdom are double to that which is;* and therefore he ſhews himſelf a *vain man* who will be wiſe in theſe matters. When people ſay they will not be of a religion that they cannot underſtand, there is one ſenſe of the word that is honeſt and good; but there is another that carries with it all the pride of impiety. If they mean no more by it, than that they would underſtand *why* they are of ſuch a religion, it is right and fair; we ought to *give a reaſon of the hope that is in us*, and therefore we ſhould *have* one: But if they will admit no more into their religion than what reaſon could have found without a Revelation, and what it can explain and diveſt of all its myſtery, it is a vile abſurdity. *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they become fools.* Job xi. 6. 12.

Do you ſay, that you will adore no God but one whoſe nature comes down to the apprehenſion of yours? that you will believe nothing that he tells you, but what you might have known if he had never told it? What a narrow Deity are you taking up with? What! is this the God that made the heavens, that formed the dry land, that filled and bounded the ſea, of whom you ſpeak? No, ſurely. Go among the Heathen, make gods as they do, and then you may underſtand all that is in them. But will you talk in this manner of Him who has *meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out the heaven with a ſpan, and comprehended the duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and weighed the mountains in ſcales and the hills in a balance? Who has* Iſa. xl. 12, 13, 14. 18. 25.

SERM. 4. *has directed the Spirit of* this *Lord, or being his counſellor has taught him? With whom took he counſel, and who inſtructed him in the path of judgment, and ſhewed him the way of underſtanding? To whom will ye liken God, or what likeneſs will ye compare unto him?* He repeats this laſt queſtion himſelf, *To whom then will you liken me, or ſhall I be equal, ſaith the Holy One?* May not theſe queſtions throw as much confuſion upon your minds, as they did upon Job, when God ſpoke them out of the whirl-

Job xxxviii. 2. 4. 6. 12. 16. 18. 33. wind? *Who is this that darkens counſel by words without knowledge? Where waſt thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou haſt underſtanding. Whereupon are the foundations thereof faſtened, or who laid the corner-ſtone thereof? Haſt thou commanded the morning ſince thy days, or cauſed the day-ſpring to know its place? Haſt thou entered into the ſprings of the ſea, or haſt thou walked in the ſearch of the depth? Haſt thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare, if thou knoweſt it all. Knoweſt thou the ordinances of heaven? canſt thou ſet the dominion thereof in the earth?*

Can you eſtabliſh notions for the reſt of mankind about the courſe of the ſtars, the motion of the earth, and the periodical flow of the waters? No; It is plain we know little of the matter. Very learned men in former ages have left behind them thoſe ſyſtems that we deſpiſe, and we cannot defend our own againſt the ſame uſage from poſterity. This change of opinions is an argument that the thing itſelf is unknown. Well, ſhall the works of *Nature* be cloſed, and thoſe of *Grace* be open? Are there myſteries every where in the world, and muſt there be none in religion? Is the wiſdom of God to be more admired in the ways he takes for our temporal ſubſiſtence, than it is in

Eccl. xi. 5. providing for us a life and immortality? *As thou knoweſt*

knoweſt not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even ſo thou knoweſt not the works of God, who maketh all. Marvellous are his works, as the ſouls of his people *know right well. There are riches of Glory in this Myſtery.* SERM. 4. Pſ. cxxxix. 14. Col. i. 27.

The argument lies in this, that if God has laid a deſign of redemption for his people, if he did ſend his Son into our nature, if he made him a propitiation for us, if we are accepted in him, and ſanctified by him, theſe are things that we muſt believe; but upon no other foundation than becauſe he has ſaid them. However, they will always continue to be the *deep things of God, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* They are true upon the light of Revelation that brings them, but they will be myſterious from the matter of which they conſiſt; and it is impoſſible, conſidering how little we know of other things, that we ſhould ever comprehend all the wonders of theſe. God dwells *in light* unapproachable, *whom no man has ſeen, nor can ſee.* 2 Tim. vi. 16.

4. Conſider how needful it is that our underſtandings do their duty to God's wiſdom by believing a Revelation, as well as our wills be obedient to his authority by complying with a precept. We *have not attained, but follow after, if we may apprehend; and we count not ourſelves to have apprehended.* Phil. iii. 12, 13.

He is to be glorified in every faculty; He will have the tribute of our whole nature. Every faculty was polluted in the fall, every one of them is renewed by his grace; and therefore they are all to have their proper ſhare in a life of duty. There is as much reaſon for the faith of a good man, as there is for his ſelf-denial. What argument is there againſt a Myſtery that will not hold as well againſt a command? I do not now mean

SERM. 4. the duties of juſtice and mercy that ſhould run through all our behaviour to men, or the fear and reverence that ſhould fill our worſhip to God; but there are other parts of obedience that every Chriſtian knows to be needful: A continuance in the ways of God at the expence of all that is dear to fleſh and blood; what our Lord calls a *taking up the croſs and following him*, without which we cannot be his diſciples. Sometimes the poſitions of intereſt and conſcience are ſo malignant to one another, that *no man can ſerve both God and mammon*. We are called to *forſake father and mother, and children, and houſes, and lands*, for the ſake of the Goſpel. We have it in our choice to live with fame and fulneſs, to roll in the preferments of the world; but then this is plainly giving up the honour that comes from God only, and putting far from us everlaſting life. In a word, things are ſometimes brought to that paſs, that *he that ſaves life ſhall loſe it, and he muſt loſe it who will ſave it to life eternal.*

Rev. xii. 11. Now theſe Martyrs are inrolled in the records of God, as thoſe that *overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their teſtimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.* Could not they ſay as much againſt this, as we do againſt Myſteries? They were not guided in that ſubmiſſion by ſenſe, or by reaſon. There was ſomething in their choice very unaccountable to a carnal mind. There could be no greater abſurdity to human

2 Tim. i. 12. reaſon than what the Apoſtle ſaith, *Though I ſuffer theſe things I am not aſhamed.* Every martyr might have had arguments enough againſt his afflictions, —the ruin of a family and loſs of reputation, health

Heb. xi. 27. or life; but he *endured, as ſeeing him who is inviſible;* which ſounds like a contradiction: They *had reſpect to the recompence of reward*, which was all

1 Pet. i. 8. out of ſight: Chriſt *whom they loved, they had not ſeen,*

ſeen, and yet *though they ſaw him not, believing in him, they rejoiced with a joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* His will concerning them was declared in a ſtrange article; but upon the whole, was it not right for them thus to die? Has not this faith given the *elders a good report?* SERM. 4.

Well, theſe were a ſort of practical Myſteries, and ſtand upon the ſame foundation with thoſe that are doctrinal, *i. e.* the Revelation of our God. Now, why muſt we ſacrifice every certain intereſt in this world, our fame, our eaſe, our eſtates and lives, to his *authority*, and yet reſolve that we will make no ſurrenders to his *wiſdom?* We do theſe things becauſe he is our *Maſter*, and is there nothing owing to him as our *Teacher?* It is he that *has put wiſdom in the inward parts, and has given underſtanding to the heart:* Is the will to be all at his ſervice, and the underſtanding excuſed from duty! We are ſaid to *comprehend a love that paſſes knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulneſs of God;* but the phraſes muſt be expounded with modeſty, becauſe the God who gives us thoſe bleſſings is *able to do exceeding abundantly above what we can aſk or think*, and he actually does ſo by *the power that works in us.* Job xxxviii. 36. Eph. iii. 18, 19, 20.

You may run the parallel between Abraham's believing that he ſhould be *the father of many nations*, and your believing a doctrine of the Goſpel. A Promiſe and a Myſtery are equally above the comprehenſion of our reaſon. I will now make the ſame compariſon between his obedience and our faith. When he was ordered to leave his father's houſe, and go into a country that God would tell him of, by faith *he obeyed, and went out not knowing whither he went;* nothing but faith could make him do it; that was the venturous principle, that truſted God, relied upon his word, and was ſatisfied in his providence. It was certainly right in Heb. xi. 8.

SERM. 4. in Abraham to do what he did. Now, ſuppoſe God had told him any thing that was purely a doctrine, ſhould not that have had the ſame admiſſion into his thoughts that the other had into his practice? This is the language of a believer, 'Lord I am univerſally thine, my whole ſoul is 'for thee, and let every faculty have a ſhare of 'the ſervice. As my will regards thy command, 'my underſtanding does the ſame by thy Goſpel; 'whatever thou haſt ſaid I muſt receive, either in-
Eph. iii. 3. 'to my faith or into my practice.' *By Revelation he makes known to us the Myſtery.*

5. Conſider, theſe are not Myſteries of man's forging. Do not ſuppoſe that in this argument we are ſtealing away your reaſon, or your liberties,
2 Cor. iv. 2. and giving them up to the controul of others. *We renounce* thoſe *hidden things of diſhoneſty*, and hate to *walk in that craftineſs*. This infamous practice has made the name of a myſtery to be abhorred.

That monſtrous iniquity of the Papiſts, the doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, is ſuch a bondage upon human nature both in ſoul and body, that I ſhall ever encourage the jealouſy of the world againſt human impoſitions, and I long for thoſe better times when that jealouſy ſhall burn like fire, and the flame faſten upon thoſe that raiſed it; when either Prieſts will teach nothing but by the rule, or if they do, that the people will not believe them. It is loading both ſenſe and reaſon with a burden too heavy for them to bear, when any tell us, that here is a change without an alteration, or a creation without a God; that what we taſte, and ſee, and ſmell, and feel to be Bread, is really Fleſh and Blood; that it is both in Earth and Heaven; that it is eaten as a Morſel, and adored as a Deity; that we ſwallow what we worſhip; that it continues the ſame, and yet is changed. Theſe are contradictions: It is a wrong way of addreſſing

ſing human nature: It makes our reaſon and ſenſes SERM. 4.
paſs for nothing; and it is worſe ſtill to call this *a God*, and to ſuppoſe that a certain formal ſinner in a fantaſtical garb, by the muttering of four words, has it in his power to work all theſe wonders. They call it a Myſtery indeed, and ſo they may; but it is what the Scripture has never given that name to, unleſs it be in diſgrace, when it ſpeaks of *a Myſtery of Iniquity*, that in the laſt times was to be celebrated with *lying wonders, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh.* Now, this is plainly *art and man's device.* The text they bring for it out of the Bible, would never convince any one, if they did not fortify their interpretations with fire and faggot; and take that way of driving Heretics out of the world, that they may drive Hypocrites into the Church. 2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10.

But the doctrines of the Goſpel are of another kind. If you do not find them in the Bible, you need not be concerned about them. That which we preach is *the record that God has given of his Son. We have not followed cunningly deviſed fables;* but have *a ſure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed. As we are allowed of God to be put in truſt with the Goſpel, ſo we ſpeak.* 1 John v. 10. 2 Pet. i. 16, 19. 2 Theſſ. ii. 4.

6. Theſe Myſteries are not confined to any party or tribe, but lie open to the peruſal of all. *All men are to ſee what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery.* If Miniſters are ſuppoſed to underſtand them better, it is not from any external character, and much leſs from any ceremony that is acted upon them, or any garb and diſtinction in thoſe that do it. No illumination goes along with human fingers. That God who puts no truſt in *the legs of a man*, has as much contempt of his *hands*. If theſe have a greater knowledge of the doctrine, it is becauſe God has bleſſed their ſtudies. They give *attendance to reading* Eph. iii. 9. Pſa. cxlvii. 10.

SERM. 4. *ing and exhortation;* they are ſuppoſed to *ſearch the Scriptures daily;* and, above all, to depend on the
2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. light that comes from above; for *all their ſufficiency is of God, who makes them able Miniſters of the New Teſtament.*

The Revelation is as open to you as it is to them. You are to judge of the doctrines they bring. If they talk of any myſteries that are not to be found in the Bible, deal with them as you would with old mens dreams, and old wives fables. Chriſtianity is no ſecret lodged with a particular order. All the
Heb. viii. 11. ſaints *ſhall know the Lord, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* Therefore take nothing upon truſt, but remem-
Iſa. viii. 20. ber the place of your laſt appeal, *to the Law and to the Teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this*
1 Joh. iv. 1. *word, it is becauſe there is no light in them. Try the*
Gal. i. 8. *Spirits whether they be of God.* If they preach *any other goſpel* than what is revealed, inſtead of receiving *their bleſſing*, you may give in *your curſe.*
Acts xvii. 2. *Search the Scriptures daily, whether the things be ſo, or not.* So that

7. The preaching of theſe Myſteries is not ſetting up the tyranny of a prieſt. I hope I ſhall ever abhor *all that* as the vileſt abuſe of Chriſtianity, and one of the moſt pernicious crimes in our nature. I know not any thing that has done more harm in the world, than for men to teach and command what they have no ground for in Scripture. They are *the light of the world, but if the light that is in them be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?*

Here the caſe is quite otherwiſe. You are not called to believe theſe things becauſe *we* demand it, nor is your faith to be either paid with places, or dragged on with penalties: You do not believe at a market-price; there is no employment either of craft or force to ſet home the Myſtery of Godlineſs. Chriſt uſes you as he would have you uſed. Do not ſay, here is a ſubjection of your reaſon, or any

any hardſhip offered to it. There is the faireſt pro- SERM. 4.
poſal that man can receive, or God can give; for
his grace *that brings ſalvation, has appeared to all* Tit. xi. 11.
men. You are bid to examine theſe doctrines, to
do it impartially; and is there any thing wrong in
this? Do not ſay, we are impoſing upon you. Your
conſcience knows that is falſe. *Our Goſpel is not of* 1 Theſ. ii. 3.
deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor of guile.

If we bring plain Scripture for any doctrine, receive it; not for our ſakes, but becauſe it is the word of truth, the language of a *God that cannot lie;* and if we do not, continue your unbelief, harden yourſelves in it, and reſolve to be unmoved. But, can you ſay that we ply you with human authority? that what we urge for the Divinity of Chriſt, the truth of his ſatisfaction, the imputation of his righteouſneſs, the infuſion of his grace, is any of that *vain converſation that we have received* 1 Pet. i. 18.
by tradition from the fathers? Do we pretend to prove this as they do the croſs in baptiſm, kneeling at the ſacrament, or bowing to the eaſt? Are they the decrees of councils, the inventions of ſynods? Are ſuch pitiful rags of authority all that we have to ſay for them? No, *We are manifeſt to God, and* 2 Cor. iii. 3.
I truſt are alſo manifeſt to your conſciences, and therefore uſe us as *good ſtewards of the manifold grace* 1 Cor. vi. 1,
of God: It is required of a ſteward that a man be 2.
found faithful. Examine *that*, and truſt us no farther than we prove every opinion. Your faith is not owing to us, we come to beg it for our God.

I ſhould now have gone into the third general head, which is to ſhow you the *uſefulneſs* of myſteries in Religion, or what good they do there; in anſwer to that queſtion, Why would God ſuffer any thing of this nature in Chriſtianity? but I am aware that would fill up more time than is now left me; I will therefore enter upon ſomething that is equal

to

SERM 4. to the few minutes that remain, and that is an APPLICATION of what you have heard.

Is it not ſtrange that any ſhould diſpute, whether Chriſtianity is myſterious or no? The text ſays *it is*, as plainly as any thing can be ſaid, and that it is ſo *without controverſy*; and ſhall we have a controverſy whether it be ſo or no? This is a contradiction to the whole language of Scripture, an affront upon the experience of God's people in every age: It tends to the ruin of practical religion, and *it increaſes to more and more ungodlineſs.*

1. This contradicts the whole language of Scripture. If there are no myſteries in Chriſtianity, why ſhould the word be ſo often rung in our ears? Why does God uſe a phraſe that has no meaning, and beſtow a vain pomp upon his doctrines, rather to confound us to than make us wiſer? Why have we any other than *words of truth and ſoberneſs?* When
1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. we read of *the deep things of God*, of *the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, and the hidden wiſdom that was ordained before the world unto our glory;* when we are told that theſe are *things that the natural man receives not, that they are only ſpiritually diſcerned; that they are hid from the wiſe and prudent;* that they are *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*; are all theſe only great ſwelling words of vanity? ſounds unfilled? or is there a ſenſe going along with them in proportion to the majeſty which they bear?

What can we ſuppoſe that the great God is talking of, when he takes expreſſions that are out of the way, and never uſed on any other occaſion? He tells us of a myſtery manifeſt to the ſaints; he calls it *the riches of the glory of this myſtery:* He directs us to an *acknowledgment* of the myſtery, and faith, that in Chriſt are *hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* Is this no more than a flouriſh of words over a doctrine that was plain, and might have been known without a Revelation? How unworthy

worthy is ſuch a reflection, of his purity! how unworthy of his goodneſs! He is not capable of that character in himſelf, and he has never deſerved it from you. Look into your Bibles; call things by the names that are given them there. Stand to that language; it will do, when the froth and laughter of fools are diſſolved and confounded. Remember who it is that has told you of *the fellowſhip of the myſtery, that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, and that to the Church is made known the manifold wiſdom of God.* And if any one tells you otherwiſe, the deciſion of the caſe is very eaſy; *Let God be true, and every man a liar. He is to be juſtified in his* SAYINGS, *and to overcome when he is judged.* SERM. 4. Eph. iii. 9, 10. Rom. iii. 4.

2. This opinion, that there are no myſteries in religion, is an affront upon all the experience of God's people in every age. I own as readily as you would have me, that no thoughts, no ſenſations of the good men that have gone before me ought to be the rule of my thinking and taſting: Faith and feeling are perſonal. But yet, ſome regard ſhould be had to the generation of God's children; not to offend againſt them, or to entertain a notion that all of them have been in a miſtake. We will ſuppoſe that *ſome* of them were weak, and not able to comprehend what you do, but are *all* of them ſo? *Art thou the firſt man that was born, or waſt thou made before the hills? Doſt thou reſtrain the ſecret of God to thyſelf? What knoweſt thou that others knew not?* Job xv. 7, 8.

The Apoſtle when he ſpeaks but of one myſtery that you find in this chain, (*viz.* preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles,) or rather of a circumſtance belonging to it, the cutting off of the Jews, and their reſtoration again, he is loſt in the ſubject, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his* Rom. xi. 33, 34, 36.

SERM. 4. *ways paſt finding out! Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counſellor? For of him, and to him, and through him, are all things.* What need was there of this excurſion, if the doctrine contained no wonder in it? Why ſhould he uſe that vehemence of language, if there was no occaſion for it? And as it was with him, ſo it has been with all thoſe who have obtained the like precious faith. They have looked into the Book of God: they have thought the Revelation ſufficient for their faith, but the *matter* of it above their reaſon. This they have confeſſed, and (which is the beſt way of owning it) it has made them earneſt for heavenly directions; they have reached after more light with prayer and fervour; their enquiries have run out into adorations. This has been the practice of thoſe who *walked humbly with their God*, and were upright before him in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation: With theſe thoughts they lived, and with the comforts that flowed from them they died. The opinion always ſunk them in their own eyes, made them uſeful to the world whilſt they knew it, and eaſy to be gone when they were called to leave it.

Now, what have we in balance to *their* character in thoſe who would lead us aſide from the doctrines which they taught and believed? This was the profeſſion of our fathers, who *through faith and patience do now inherit the promiſes.* Paul we know, Peter we know, what they ſaid and apprehended we can tell, but *who are theſe*, that are for beating all down again? What is the language of this new opinion? Put it with the greateſt modeſty you can, and it muſt run to this purpoſe: 'Alas! good men! 'they are miſtaken. There is no myſtery in what 'they admired, no truth in many things which 'they believed. Their devotion upon theſe heads 'might all have been ſpared; the God they ſerved

'kept

'kept them in the dark both living and dying, but SERM 4.
'we ſee into the ſtrong deluſion, and are delivered
'from the *enthuſiaſm* of former ages.' And who are this ſet of men, whom God has taught at a better rate than ever he did his Prophets, his martyrs, his humble faithful people, in the ſeveral ages of the world? What is there in them that ſhows a greater illumination? Or, why muſt we, in compliment to them, throw a ſlur upon the *cloud of witneſſes* that have gone before us? I do not love to make invidious compariſons, and will therefore only ſay of the one ſort and the other, 'You know 'the men and their communications.'

3. This tends to the ruin of practical religion: When people are *corrupted from the ſimplicity of the goſpel*, when they lay aſide the truth as it is in Jeſus, it is foretold, and it may be obſerved, that this will *increaſe to more and more ungodlineſs*. And the reaſon is plain why it ſhould do ſo; if once there is a refuſal to admit any thing upon a divine teſtimony, it deſtroys a confidence in God. If we cannot truſt his word for a doctrine, we cannot truſt it for a promiſe. It throws us into ourſelves; we are *alienated from the life of God*, can neither live to him in duty, nor live with him in communion, *through the darkneſs that is in us:* This makes us *caſt off fear, and reſtrain prayer before him.* 2 Tim. ii. 16. Job xv. 4.

Theſe are myſteries of Godlineſs. Godlineſs flows from them, and is maintained by them. We read of ſome who *ſpeak great ſwelling words of vanity, and allure through the luſts of the fleſh and much wantonneſs, thoſe who were clean eſcaped from them that live in error: While they promiſe them liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption.* Corruption brings error, and error brings *that. The time ſhall come that they will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts ſhall heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears;* and ſo *they ſhall* 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

be

SERM. 4. *be turned away from the truth, and be turned unto fables.* You will have men drink and ſwear, and commit iniquity with greedineſs, and in that filth be zealous againſt the doctrines of the Goſpel; as if any character was good enough for thoſe that *oppoſe* Chriſtianity, though we know what manner of perſons they ſhould be who *maintain* it. He who refuſes a myſtery becauſe he cannot underſtand it, will be as ready to ſlight a precept becauſe he does not like it. And, indeed, I fear it is from a hatred of practical godlineſs that many run into ſtrange opinions. It is a ſort of a bauble to the conſcience; ſomething for it to play with, and divert itſelf by.

4. This will increaſe to more error. And there are two reaſons to be given for it. *Firſt*, The natural tendency of that principle; and, *ſecondly*, The judicial reſentment of God. He gives them up to *walk after their own luſts.* He leaves them to *ſtrong deluſions*, to *vile affections*, to a *reprobate mind; evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived.* Therefore, do you *continue in the things that you have learned.* If once a perſon has any objection againſt a divine teſtimony, he can ſtick at nothing. He is looſe, and open to *every wind of doctrine:* He is driven from his anchor; he has no hold; nothing to keep him firm and ſteady. From rejecting one point of Scripture, we naturally go on to ſtrike at the whole foundation. And when we come that length, to think that God has given us no rule for our faith and practice, there is nothing ſo fooliſh and impious in the religion of the Heathen, but we may tumble into it. Theſe are ſome of the conſequences of denying that *Chriſtianity is myſterious.*

Pſ. lxxxi. 12
2 Theſ. ii. 11.
Rom. i. 26. 28.
2 Tim. iii. 13, 14.

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SERMON V.

June 8. 1718.

III. WHAT is the BENEFIT of having Myſteries in the Chriſtian religion? Why could not our Lawgiver have done as others did, only laid before us a ſet of rules, and diſtributed them under the ſeveral heads of practice, without ever engaging our faith in any ſpeculations at all?

I ſuppoſe you are no ſtrangers to the objection that is formed upon this head, and in how triumphant a manner ſome perſons have talked it, as if they were ſure of deſtroying the foundation that God has laid in Zion, and making *him* a ſecond time to be *deſpiſed of the builders*, whom infinite Wiſdom has appointed to be *the Head of the corner*. Upon this we have had a run againſt the religion of the Goſpel. They have turned its *glory into ſhame*, and taken occaſion to laugh at it for the ſake of thoſe doctrines that diſtinguiſh it above all others. We have this account from the Apoſtle, that he was called *to preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery,—the manifold wiſdom of God.* Eph. iii. 8, 9.

That Chriſtianity has delivered to us the beſt rules of life, that all the morality of the Heathen falls ſhort of the directions we meet with here, that *the grace of God which brings ſalvation teaches us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, is what we may affirm. And though the proof of it would be a large work, yet really it is a very eaſy one. There needs no more, in order to it, than opening many branches of duty, and comparing what the Goſpel ſaith upon theſe heads, with Tit. ii. 11, 12.

SERM. 5. with the leſſons of philoſophers. The diſpenſations they were under are ſaid to be *times of ignorance*, but ours is a *heavenly viſion;* it calls men to repent and turn to God, and do things meet for repentance.

But then the queſtion is, Why there is any thing more in religion than commandments? Why, in a Tit. ii. 4. life of duty, there muſt be a *looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour?* and why we ought to conſider him as having *given himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar people that are zealous of good works?*

In anſwer to this, I would firſt lay down my aſſertion, and then maintain it. I do therefore, without any recoil affirm, That the Myſteries which God has revealed in the Goſpel are the glory of that diſpenſation: That the rules of duty had been imperfect without them: That they are ſuited to all the work of grace in our hearts, and all its employment in our lives: That we could not have known *what is good, in doing juſtice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God*, had he not ſhown it to us in this light. Theſe doctrines are ſo far from being unconcerned with practice, that the whole is *a Myſtery of Godlineſs.*

How well they are placed in our religion you will ſee by the following particulars: 1. We are thus led to an eſteem for the ſalvation itſelf that infinite Wiſdom has contrived; 2. We have the beſt arguments for our duty, from the incarnation, ſatisfaction and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt: 3. We have the nobleſt example of all practical holineſs from God's being manifeſt in the fleſh: 4. We are inclined and encouraged to the duty of prayer, by this new and living way that is conſecrated for us: 5. We have the greateſt hopes of ſucceeding in the whole courſe of our duty, from the

the method of redemption that is now eſtabliſhed : 6. We have the principles of all practical religion enlarged and refreſhed by the Myſteries that are laid before us : 7. We are made low in our own eyes, becauſe of the ignorance that is in us : 8. We ſee the neceſſity of depending upon the Spirit for illumination : 9. We are taught a greater value for the revelation God has given of himſelf ; and, 10. It draws out our deſires after heaven, where thoſe things are no longer to be known through a glaſs darkly, but in God's own light we ſhall ſee their light. SERM. 5.

Of this advantage are the Myſteries of Godlineſs. Without them theſe noble ends could not have been anſwered. The beſt rules of life muſt have loſt their deſign, and lain waſte in the Book of God. We have 'the knowledge of ſalvation by 'the remiſſion of ſins, through the tender mercy 'of our God ; the day-ſpring that viſits us from 'on high, gives light to thoſe that ſit in darkneſs, 'and guides their feet into the way of peace.' Luke i. 77, 78, 79.

When *the law is eſtabliſhed by faith*, it gets a firmneſs and an influence that it could never have had any other way. Rom. iii. 31.

1. By the Myſteries of the Goſpel we are led to an eſteem for the ſalvation itſelf that God has given us, becauſe thus we ſee it was the contrivance of infinite Wiſdom. The *faith of God's elect*, and *the acknowledging of the myſtery which is after godlineſs*, are *in hope of eternal life, which God has manifeſted through the preaching that is committed* to his miniſters. There is more of the divine love to be admired in the ſecond covenant than in the firſt. Adam's religion, as far as we know it, was, *That the man who does thoſe things ſhall live by them.* And in that diſpenſation he was to adore the goodneſs of his Maker, who ſuffered himſelf to be ſought unto, and viſited by the work of his own hands. Tit. i. 2, 3. Rom. x. 5.

But

SERM. 5. But the recovery of this happineſs when it was loſt, is a thing more out of the way. There is a compaſs to be taken in the contrivance. The law was included in a ſhort revelation, Obey God's authority, and thou ſhalt have his favour; there was no more for God to do than to make known his will. But when juſtice had been provoked, and goodneſs abuſed, in order to give mercy a new courſe for its glory, there are methods to be found out, oppoſitions removed, an incenſed nature muſt be reconciled, a polluted one reſtored. And there-
Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6. fore when *the love and kindneſs of God towards man now appears*, it looks otherwiſe than it did in Paradiſe. The Revelation brings along with it more beneficence, in that it is *not by works of righteouſneſs that we have done, but according to his mercy that he ſaves us, by waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* Here is pains to be taken: Here is a change to be wrought: This work *he ſheds on us abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.*

Our firſt parents would have valued any manifeſtation that God made of himſelf to them. When they heard his voice in the cool of the day, it might have cheered their ſouls, though they had done nothing to loſe his favour. But what is this to the diſcoveries that are now ſent among a loſt
Pſ. viii. 4. race! *What is man*, ſince the fall, *that God is mindful of him, and the ſon of man that he now viſits him!* The ſalvation that we ſhould have deſerved in Paradiſe, muſt have been paid in as the wages of duty; but to be ſaved by the manifeſtation of a God in the Fleſh, by his bringing in *an everlaſting righteouſneſs*; to be made happy at his expence as a High Prieſt, and by his virtue as a King; theſe are new endearments to the favour.
Rom. x. 4. *Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believes.* It repreſents our happineſs

as

as bought with a price; we muſt value it, not only for what it is worth, but for what it actually coſt, *the precious blood of the Son of God, as a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot.* SERM. 5. 1 Pet. i. 19.

When our Saviour tells the perſon who was *willing to juſtify himſelf, This do and thou ſhalt live,* he does not only put him upon a thing impoſſible, but in that ſcheme he hides the glory of Divine mercy. Could we do that by which we may live, there would be little room to admire the goodneſs of God, and much leſs to adore his wiſdom. Salvation had come cheap; we had made it ourſelves: But when we are told, in order to it, there is an old guilt to be done away, and a new nature to be implanted, it ſhows that an infinite Mind muſt have been at work about it.

The word of reconciliation, that he has committed to us is, *That God is in Chriſt Jeſus reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes to them.* 2 Cor. v. 19. This is a great deal more than he needed to have ſaid to Adam. There was then nothing but a continuing the communion in which he was placed at firſt: But now, here is, *firſt,* A *reconciling us to himſelf.* And therefore, *ſecondly,* He would have bleſſed our firſt parents without a Mediator, uſed them as he did the angels; they might have come at once to his throne; but now there is a middle Perſon between God and man, it is *in Chriſt Jeſus* that he reconciles them. And how is it? but, *thirdly,* In a way that our firſt parents had no occaſion for, and that is, by *not imputing their treſpaſſes to them:* They wanted no pardon. But we are to be conſidered as innocent, though we are guilty; and as not doing the many things that we have done. Now, by what method, or upon what foundation does he pronounce thoſe to be righteous whom he knows to be ſinful? *Fourthly, He makes him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that*

SERM 5. *we may be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* So that here is a new way to happineſs, which would never have been known, had our nature continued in its primitive purity.

O! what a ſalvation is this, that comes from ſomething elſe beſides the equity of the Legiſlator! What a Friend is our God, who would not only have rewarded the righteouſneſs of our works, but has employed himſelf upon a ſcheme that imputes

Eph. ii. 14. to us *righteouſneſs without works!* we who were *afar off are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt, for he*

1 Tim. i. 1. *is our peace. He is our hope.* Our way is *through*

Heb. x. 20. *the vail, that is, his fleſh.* Is not this *a faithful*

Iſa. lii. 9, 10. *ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation? Sing aloud, ye waſte places of the earth, the Lord has comforted his people, and made bare his holy arm.* Look upon your happineſs as a thing projected by infinite Wiſdom. Declare the decree. It is the *purpoſe that he purpoſed in himſelf.* You now *lay hold on eternal life, which God that cannot lie promiſed before the world began.* See your portion in heaven, not as a thing that grew out of your duties, as the fruit of an imperfect religion here, but as a contrivance that was laid in one eternity, and ſhall be performed in another. Your holineſs is not the

2 Theſſ. ii. 13. root of the ſcheme, but one of the branches. *God has from the beginning choſen us to ſalvation through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* This the Apoſtle admires, though he lived a long

Gal. i. 15, 16. while before he felt the deſign, *when it pleaſed God who ſeparated him from his mother's womb to reveal his Son in him.* He has choſen his people to be

Jam. ii. 5. *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom that he promiſed to thoſe that love him.*

2. We have the beſt arguments for our duty from the incarnation, ſatisfaction and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. *God has appointed us to obtain ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us, that whether*

ther we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him. Theſe are things people object againſt. A God manifeſt in the fleſh is called nonſenſe; an innocent perſon's ſuffering for the guilty is an unjuſtice; and a dead man's riſing again is an impoſſibility. I anſwer, upon their principles, that if theſe things had been told us by any other than God himſelf, we might have joined with them in a determined infidelity. We could never have believed any of them upon leſs than a Divine evidence. Theſe Myſteries would have borne all the hard names that they give them, if we had received them any other way than by the revelation of a God that cannot lie. But, if they are true, as every thing that He ſays muſt be, do but ſee what good they do to the practical part of religion. SERM. 5.

We are *eſtabliſhed by this Goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, and the revelation of the myſtery, which is made manifeſt to all nations for the obedience of faith.* They that talk ſo much of morality, can, in no ſtories, give us thoſe examples of it that we have in the Bible. What acts of juſtice and mercy do we find in the lives of the Apoſtles! They could truly ſay, with an appeal to the whole world, *We have wronged no man, we have defrauded no man.* But beſides that, what pains did they take! What dangers did they run, in diffuſing the Goſpel! and why was all this? Could they not have made as great a figure without it? Yes; but it is evident they were friends to the world, enlarged with pity to their whole nature; and therefore carried about with them what they thought was the way for mankind to be happy. What was it that put them upon this, but one of the myſteries that are recorded in my text? *The love of Chriſt conſtrains us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died, that they that live ſhould not live to themſelves, but* Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

SERM 5. *but to him that died for them and roſe again.* You ſee here how they argue from the ſtory of a Saviour in its ſeveral branches.

The firſt principle is, that Chriſt *loved* them. And the very thoughts of that threw them into a συνέχει. ſort of convulſion; they are drawn and conſtrained by it, to make all their lives a tribute to him: This was not a ſpirit of enthuſiaſm, or a fanatical vapour, but what they deduced in a vein of cool and genuine reaſoning: *We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.* This love of his ſhows them what they were in themſelves, impotent, unhappy; under a ſentence, and preparing for an execution. What a reach of mercy was this! He died *that they who live ſhould not live to themſelves;* the argument is very good, for they did not live *by* themſelves; without him they had not lived at all; *but* to *Him that died for them* to deſerve their duty, *and roſe again* to employ it.

What is there like this in any other collection of precepts? How ſhould we have had this fire of the altar, theſe principles of zeal to our duty, if religion had contained none of the Myſteries that are here mentioned? All our holineſs is thrown into this ſort of language, *We are baptiſed into* Rom. vi. 3. 4. 6. *Chriſt Jeſus, baptiſed into his death*; we are *buried with him by baptiſm into death;* and *as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, ſo we are to walk in newneſs of life. Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin may be deſtroyed.* The meaning of all theſe phraſes we have afterwards: *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you;* and the reaſon why it ſhall not is, *becauſe you are not under the law, but under grace.* Suppoſe God had told us all that he has now ſaid about our obedience, and given us none of theſe arguments, what would the conſequence of that have been? only making this world to be one of the outer-rooms of hell, where a ſet of creatures lived,

lived, who were taught indeed, but not perſuaded. SERM. 5.
Whereas the great work of grace is not only to make us a knowing, but a *willing people in the day of his power.* Religion indeed has always been a tribute to Him that made us. *He has made us and not we ourſelves*, is an univerſal argument; but we find from all experience that it will not do. It is not the common character of our nature that the Apoſtle lays down. *No man of us lives to himſelf, and no man dies to himſelf.* It is what every one ought to ſay, that *if we live, we live unto the Lord.* But how comes it to be ſo with them in fact? They know, *that to this end Chriſt both died and roſe again and revived, that he might be the Lord both of dead and living.*

Pſa. cx. 3.

Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

3. We have the nobleſt example of all practical holineſs from God's being manifeſt in the Fleſh. As he taught the law without the darkneſs in which others had involved it, ſo he ſhowed it without any corruption in his life. *He did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* Hence he ſtands as the great Pattern; *be you followers of me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *as I am of Chriſt:* Now, this had never been, if he had not come down into the Fleſh, and dwelt amongſt us.

1 Pet. ii. 22.

1 Cor. xi. 1.

We are bid to be *followers of him as dear children.* The Scripture has all along, in the ſeveral parts of duty, directed us hither. Thus when we are called to humility, it is in the brighteſt view of that grace and practice; *let the ſame mind be in you that was in Chriſt Jeſus, who being in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took on him the form of a ſervant.* As an evidence of this principle we are to be patient, and to endure the diſorders of thoſe to whom the grace of God has been more ſparing. *We that are ſtrong are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves.* Why ſo? *Becauſe Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.*

Eph. v. 1.

Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7.

Rom. xv. 1, 3.

SERM. 5. *self.* This is what he argued in his own perſon, *Let him that will be great among you, be the ſervant of all, even as the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter: I am among you as one that ſerves.* Thus, when we are employed about that neceſſary work of forgiving injuries, whether there are reaſons for it in nature, I ſhall not now examine, but I am very ſure the beſt of them muſt be fetched from Revelation. *We put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs and long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God has for Chriſt's ſake forgiven you.* When we are exhorted to a gentle, eaſy, quiet carriage, we *learn* it of Him who *is meek and lowly,* and ſo *find reſt to our ſouls.* Our charity to thoſe in trouble, looks to Him as the great example: *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty may be made rich. If he our Lord and Maſter waſhed their feet,* they ought to waſh one anothers. *He has given an example, and we ſhould do as he has done;* and how ſtrong is the motive? *The ſervant is not greater than his lord, nor he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.*

Col. iii. 12, 13.
Mat. xi. 29.
2 Cor. viii. 9.
Joh. xiii. 14, 15, 16.

Do not ſay theſe rules were ſufficient without examples; that is talking againſt all the experience of our nature. It is not in vain that we are *compaſſed about with a great cloud of witneſſes,* but we look off from them, or rather look up above them, to *Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith: We conſider him who endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt we be weary and faint in our minds.* Our religion is formed in ſimilitude to him; *both he that ſanctifies, and they that are ſanctified are all of one, wherefore he is not aſhamed to call them brethren:* And it is practiſed in walking after him; *If any man ſerve me, let him follow me, and where*

Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3.
ἀφορῶντες
Heb. ii. 11.
Joh. xii. 26.

I am, there ſhall my ſervant be. There is a peace that flows into us, not only from our keeping the directions, but agreeing with the example that is ſet before us: *Herein we have boldneſs in the day of judgment, that as he was, ſo we are in the world.* What would have become of all this, if God was not manifeſt in the Fleſh? SERM. 5. 1 Joh. iv. 17.

4. We are in particular inclined and encouraged to the duty of prayer, by this *new and living way that is conſecrated for us through the vail, that is to ſay, his Fleſh.* This is the main employment of religion, and whatever helps it on muſt be of the greateſt value to our character and our peace. We will ſuppoſe that in all nations there are ſome crying to him that made them. *They feel after him, if haply they may find him, for he is not far from any one of us.* Prayer is a confeſſion of ſin, a begging for pardon, and any other mercy that we want, and a gratitude for thoſe that we either have or hope for. But how heavily would this work have gone on, if there had been none of theſe Myſteries in religion? Heb. x. 20. Acts xvii. 27.

In what manner muſt you have confeſſed your ſins, if God himſelf had not given you *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all by the blood of Jeſus?* What is the difference between the howlings of conſcienee here, and thoſe in hell, if there is no regard to pardoning love? It is upon this ground that *he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* We can only ſay this from a belief that there is *a blood of ſprinkling, ſpeaking better things than the blood of Abel.* Heb. x. 19. 1 Joh. i. 9. Heb. xii. 24.

It is true, we may tell God our wants, but what hope have we of being ſupplied? Strip the duty of prayer of all its relation to the doctrines of the Goſpel, and you take away its arguments. *The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.* It is becauſe *Jeſus, the great Shepherd of the ſheep, is* Heb vii. 19. iv. 14. 16

paſſed

SERM. 5. *paſſed into the heavens, that we come boldly to the throne of grace, in hope of obtaining mercy and find-*
Heb. x. 21, 22. *ing grace to help in every time of need. We have an High Prieſt over the houſe of God, and therefore draw near with a true heart, and a full aſſurance*
Joh. xiv. 6. *of faith.* There is no *coming to the Father but by Him who is the way, the truth, and the life.* Prayer had been a heartleſs and helpleſs work, if it was
Eph. iii. 12. not for this proviſion: But now *we have boldneſs of acceſs with confidence, through the faith of him.*
1 Joh. ii. 1. *If any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.*

5. We have the beſt hope of ſucceeding in the whole work of our duty, from the redemption that is now eſtabliſhed. The ground of all religion is
Rom. ii. 7. laid in this, that *they who by a patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for honour, glory and immortality,*
Joh. v. 29. ſhall have *eternal life:* That *they who do good ſhall come to the reſurrection of life, and they that do evil, to the reſurrection of damnation.* But from whence have you any encouragement this way, if you throw out the promiſes of the Goſpel, and the Myſteries upon which they are founded?

Suppoſe I was to argue with a polite Heathen, and aſk him, Why he does ſo much good in the world? he will anſwer, It is in hopes of a future reward. Well, but how does he know this? I take it for granted, he will argue from God's juſtice; that *he renders to every man according to his works.* Thus far it is very well, but the main difficulty is yet to come. He cannot but find himſelf a ſinner, there is a great deal of his duty that he has not done; and if the juſtice of God rewards what is good, it muſt lay him under an equal neceſſity to puniſh what is bad. If indeed I were pure and ſporleſs. *I might lift up my face before him,* but as it is not ſo, what is to become of me now?

To

To ſay that God will pardon, is really talking at random, out of the Goſpel; that he will do ſo is true, but that is more than either they or any one elſe can know without a revelation. If a prieſt ſhould aſſure them that their *works* deſerve eternal life, yet he leaves an awakened conſcience uneaſy, if he cannot tell them what becomes of their *ſins*. SERM. 5.

Now, it is from the ſatisfaction made by Chriſt, that we ſee how our happineſs conſiſts with all the glory of God: That if we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us. In this diſpenſation there is no room for deſpair from the greatneſs, the multitude, and aggravation of our iniquities. If our ſins *be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; if they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* Our God will not only *have mercy, but abundantly pardon.* The Heathen religion, in the looſeſt way of teaching it, ſuppoſed a merit in their good works, to deſerve a reward for themſelves, and a pardon for their vices. But this would only give hope to the beſt among them. There is nothing in their way of thinking like ſalvation to *the chief of ſinners.* That we muſt know from the Goſpel, that *with our God is plenteous redemption, and he ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his iniquities.* Iſa. i. 18. —lv. 7. Pſ. cxxx. 7, 8.

6. By theſe Myſteries the principles of all practical religion are enlarged and encouraged. It is in a meditation upon theſe that we *ſtir up the grace of God that is in us.* We are *therefore ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of God,* as *we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.* The Apoſtle argues this from the reſurrection of the dead, in a very long chapter. From hence he concludes that we ought to be *ſteady* in the ways of God; nay, to *abound* in them, to do every thing better, be daily throwing more life and virtue into all our duties. And thus we find it is in fact. We grow languid and dull, when our thoughts with- 1 Cor. xv. 58.

SERM. 5. draw themſelves from the great doctrines of Chri-
1 Pet. i. 11. ſtianity. When Peter had mentioned the *ſufferings*
13. *of Chriſt and the glory that ſhould follow*, he ſays in this view, We muſt *gird up the loins of our minds, and be ſober and hope until the end.* It is an alluſion either to travellers or racers, that put themſelves into a poſture for all the length of their journey, or all the toil of their courſe; and in that we are not only doing our duty, but we *wait for the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt:* Either the revelation we ſhall have *of him*, or the revelation we ſhall have *by him:* Either the grace that he ſhews in himſelf, or the grace that he brings to his people.

7. We are by this means kept low in our own eyes; as we find there are things above the reach of nature, and beyond the comprehenſion of faith. There is nothing we are apt to be more proud of than our knowledge. *Vain man would be wiſe.* We had rather be diſtinguiſhed by what we *know*, than by what we *do.* This was the primitive wickedneſs of our nature. Our firſt parents wanted nothing to make them more holy, *that* was not their temptation; but they *ſaw the tree was deſirable to make one wiſe.*

Eccl. iii. 18. Now *God makes it manifeſt to the ſons of men, they*
1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21. *ſee that themſelves are beaſts. He deſtroys the wiſdom of the wiſe, and brings to nought the underſtanding of the prudent:* And in the work of redemption we may ſay, *Where is the wiſe, where is the ſcribe, where is the diſputer of this world? Has not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world? For, after that in the wiſdom of God, the world through wiſdom knew not God,* (either their wiſdom was inſufficient or oppoſite to that knowledge), *it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that be-*
1 Cor. iii. 19. *lieve. The wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God.*

It

It is eaſy to ſee what would have been the effect of having no Myſteries in religion. We may imagine *that*, from the temper of the men who ſay there are none. For *the preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs.* The ſcorn which they pour out upon others, *the cruel mockings* which they deal abroad among the people of God, againſt the faith once delivered to the ſaints, is an argument that the religion they deſpiſe was contrived on purpoſe *to hide pride from man.* To thoſe that look aright into it, it does ſo. If a perſon talk in a diminutive way of the mighty ocean, and, becauſe he has never ſeen it, imagine it was only like a large river, but that he could eaſily conceive where it begun, and where it ended; the beſt way would be to ſend him to ſea, and when he has been ſome time without ſight of land, he will learn to think and ſpeak after another manner. Juſt ſo it is here; what a ſinner knows nothing at all of, he can eaſily explain; but when the grace of God gives him the knowledge of the truth, with that he finds his own ignorance: The further he goes the deeper it is. Like the bow of the ſky that we imagine touches the hill where it cloſes the ſight, but when we come there, it is as far off as before. We cannot ſuppoſe ourſelves to have *apprehended, but this one thing we do, forget what is behind, and reach to thoſe things that are before.* SERM. 5. Phil. iii. 13.

8. This ſhews us the neceſſity of depending upon the Spirit for illumination, as well as upon Chriſt for acceptance. We ſhould never enquire after this light, if there were not *deep things of God.* But this makes it the continual employment of a Chriſtian to call in diſcoveries from above, that he may *apprehend that for which he is apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. We receive not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.* This is the great bleſſing, for which the Apoſtle ceaſed not 1 Cor. ii. 12.

to

SERM. 5. to make mention in his prayers, *That the God of our*
Eph. i. 16. 17. *Lord Jesus Christ might give them the Spirit of wis-*
Ch iii 14 16. 18. *dom and revelation in the knowledge of him. For this cause he bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus, that he would grant, according to the riches of his glory, that they might comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height.*

9. This teaches a greater value for the revelation God has made of himself. The Bible contains indeed the plainest rules of duty, for which we admire it; but there also we have the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery.* And if these are things that we know but in part, how much should we have been in the dark, had God said nothing at all about them? It is a low jest, when we are laughed at for admiring what we do not understand, and the retortion is but just upon the people that make it, that if this is their principle, we may conclude it is *very little* that they admire. For our parts, we read and adore, we see but through a glass darkly; and we may say to one of them as Elihu did to a
Job xxxvii. 14, 15. 19. wiser man, *Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God: Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?—Teach us what we shall say to him, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.*

10. This draws out our desires towards heaven; without which there can be neither the purity nor the comfort of religion. We long to be where the veil is taken off from the object, and the fet-
1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. 12. ters from the faculty. *We know in part, and prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away; now we*
1 John iii. 2. *see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. It does not appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

SER-

SERMON VI.

June 22. 1718.

BESIDES the title of Myſtery that is given to the Chriſtian Religion, there are two words more in this verſe: 1*ſt*, That it is a *great* Myſtery: 2*dly*, That it is ſo *without controverſy*. Theſe are what I ſhall now enquire into, as they lead us to farther views of that doctrine which God has made to be the glory of the beſt diſpenſation that ever his people came under: The report we have of Him who has *appeared to aboliſh death, and bring life and immortality to light by the Goſpel.* 2 Tim. i. 10.

(1.) When the Apoſtle calls this a GREAT *Myſtery*, I ſuppoſe he does it in a way of pre-eminence to what is contained in other religions, more eſpecially theſe two:

Firſt, The myſteries of the *Heathen*. Theſe made a mighty noiſe in the world. In particular the Eleuſinian Myſteries, which were taught at Epheſus. To theſe no perſons were admitted till they had been trained up five or ſeven years in a way of preparation for them. They were ſo highly eſteemed, that the Emperor Adrian went twice into thoſe parts to be acquainted with them, upon which I cannot but have a ſuſpicion of their being changed. Theſe were then accounted the beſt entertainments of religion, and yet they who were brought into the ſecret muſt never open their mouths about them, but only make their boaſt of privileges that to all others were unknown.

Secondly, There were myſteries in the *Jewiſh* religion. God made his *wonderful works to be remembered. They thought of his loving kindneſs in* Pſ cxi. 4. xlviii. 9.

the

SERM. 6 *the midſt of his temple*, and he was *terrible out of*
Pſal. lxviii. *his holy places. Theirs was the glory*, which com-
35. prehended the Pillar of Cloud and Fire that ſe-
Rom. ix. 4. cured their marches through the wilderneſs; and the great *appearance* that was both the guard and the ornament of their temple.—Timothy, to whom this epiſtle was directed, had an opportunity of hearing much about *both* theſe ſorts of myſteries.
Acts xvi. 1. For as his father was a Greek, and himſelf uncircumciſed for many years, ſo he could be no ſtranger to thoſe things of which the Gentiles always boaſted. And, on the other hand, as his grandmother and mother were ſerious people, and *from*
2 Tim. i. 5. *a child had brought him up in the knowledge of the*
——iii. 15. *Scriptures*, ſo he was taught to admire all the true myſteries in which God had revealed himſelf to the Jews. Well, the Apoſtle tells him, that here was a Myſtery *greater* than what the one pretended to, and what the other really contained.

1. As to the myſteries they made ſuch a noiſe of in their temple at Epheſus, they are all outdone by our Goſpel, upon theſe four accounts; that our myſteries are learned all at once, they refer us to our greateſt happineſs, they come from God himſelf, and they are diffuſed over the whole world.

(1.) The Myſtery of Godlineſs is in this reſpect greater than any among the Heathen, in that we learn it *at once*. Here are no years thrown away in a tedious preparation. The Goſpel is not acquainted with thoſe wretched arts of keeping people in ignorance, as an introduction to future knowledge. No, no; *the entrance of the word*
Joh. vi. 45. *gives light*: It breaks in at once. *The people are all taught of God, and every one that hears and*
2 Pet. i. 19. *learns of the Father comes to Chriſt.* This *ſure word of propheſy*, to which we do well to take heed, *ſhines as a light in a dark place.* All was confuſion before,

before, but that is done away; *the darkneſs is paſt,* SERM. 6.
and the true light now ſhines. We all with open 1 Joh. ii. 8.
face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii.
are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory. 18.
They ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and Heb. viii.
every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for 11.
they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.
The fathers have known him from the beginning, the 1 Joh. ii.
little children have known the Father. This is our 13.
firſt benefit by the miniſtry of the Goſpel. It is
appointed to *open our eyes, and turn us from dark-* Acts xxvi.
neſs to light. 18.

There is no keeping of people in a preparatory dulneſs. That is plainly the trick of covetous men. And *wo to thoſe who take away the key of know-* Luk. xi. 52.
ledge. The proceedings of Divine Grace are more generous; ſo that if the Epheſians boaſted what Myſteries they had put themſelves into the way of learning, and that in the ſpace of a few years they could know the great ſecrets of religion that were revealed no where elſe but in their temple, Timothy had it in his power to demoliſh all that confidence. He might tell them, that Chriſtianity had its Myſteries, which we come to know, without all that laborious ſearch, or running a vain round for many years. *The leaſt in the kingdom of God* was acquainted, the firſt moment of his converſion, with a great deal more than they could pretend to. We have *the true Light that lighteth every man that* John i. 9.
comes into the world.

(2.) This Myſtery is about matters of more importance to our final happineſs. *This is life eter-* — xvii. 3.
nal, to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt
whom he has ſent. Here we learn, what all the liberality of the Gentile prieſthood neither could nor would have told us, that there is a way of redemption which brings *glory to God in the higheſt,* Luk. ii. 14.
on earth peace, and revealed a *good will towards*
men.

SERM. 6. *men.* Here is a doctrine fitted to the tortures of an awakened conſcience, and all the entanglement of a guilty nature. Here we are led to admire what God has done to make us happy, with a glory to his juſtice as well as his mercy.

They could never know God's love to mankind, whilſt they were ſtrangers to him as *manifeſt in the Fleſh.* This is a nobler ſort of evidence of his regard to human nature, than we can have in all
Joh. iii. 16. the bounties of creation and providence. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son into the world, that whoſoever believes in him ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting life.* How could they imagine any repairs to the injuries of a broken law without a ſatisfaction? And this they could never apprehend, had not He who was manifeſt in the Fleſh been *juſtified in the Spirit.* Our
Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. redemption is *in Chriſt Jeſus, whom God has ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believes in Jeſus.* They muſt be ſtrangers to all this till Chriſt Jeſus was *preached unto the Gentiles,* and *believed on in the world.* Nor could they know where to reſt their confidence; what mighty arm was able to bear the faith of a ſoul: But we *know in whom we have believed,* and that he can *ſave to the uttermoſt,* becauſe he was *received up into glory.* What ſignifies it to have a company of ſecrets and rarities, that make us neither better in our practice, nor eaſier in our expectations? You ſee, the wonders of the Chriſtian Religion are *no vain thing,* becauſe they are *your life.* They begin the life that is now your principle, they open and aſſure the life that will be your portion.

(3.) Theſe Myſteries were given us by God himſelf. The long time that the Heathen religion would

would keep us waiting, and the new ſet of doc- SERM. 6.
trines that were to be learned every ſeven years, had in it all the appearance of artifice: It looks as like prieſtcraft as any thing in the world could do. But *God is the Rock; his work is perfect, a God of truth and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.* There are none of theſe frauds in the diſcoveries, to leave us uncertain about the author. Deu. xxxii. 4.

The prophets of old were not only *moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, but the hand of God came upon them in ſuch ways that others knew it was *from the Lord. The poor of the flock that waited upon Zechariah knew it was the word of the Lord.* The hand of the Lord God fell upon Ezekiel as he ſat in his houſe, and *the elders of Judah ſat before him.* In the New Teſtament the great Preacher was our bleſſed Saviour. His enemies knew that he was *a teacher come from God, becauſe no man could do thoſe things that he did except God was with him.* And as he *began to preach the great ſalvation*, ſo this was *afterwards confirmed to us by them that heard him.* Nor do we depend only upon their veracity, but God *himſelf bare them witneſs with divers ſigns and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* They that *received the word, received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in them that believe.* Zec. xi. 11. Ezek. viii. 1. John iii. 2. Heb. ii. 3. 1 Theſſ. ii. 13.

I doubt not, but the prieſts among the Heathen would tell their pupils, that all the diſcoveries they made came from heaven. Juſt as ſome do now, who plainly promote the Gentile religion under the Chriſtian name, and are not aſhamed to abuſe the world with ridiculous ſtories of ſaints and angels appearing, nay, of the Virgin Mary's ſhewing herſelf to the heroes of the little factions among them; *intruding into things which they have not ſeen, vainly puffed up in their fleſhly minds.* We

SERM. 6. may confront theſe *fables*, as we ſhould do thoſe of the Heathen, that it is unworthy of *the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, to come ſtrolling from heaven to earth upon thoſe childiſh errands. For
Eccl. ix 5, 6. *the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten; alſo their love and their hatred and their envy is now periſhed; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the ſun.*
Rev. xiv. 13 *They that die in the Lord do reſt from their labours.*

The Revelation that God has given us, is worthy
1 Joh. v. 10 of himſelf. It is the *record about his Son.* It ſets his own perfections in the beſt light for our eſteem
2 Cor. iv. 6 and worſhip. We never ſee the *glory of God* ſo well as *in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.* This is the *greateſt* thing that ever he did, as well as the beſt and kindeſt. This was more than making the world, and ſhows us his power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, moving in a nobler deſign. When he ſeparated the light from the darkneſs, the waters from the earth, appointed time to make the firſt diviſion,
Gen. i. 31. and a firmament the ſecond, he *looked on what he had done, and it was all very good.* But the partitions that he makes between light and darkneſs in the redemption of mankind, are more auguſt and durable. Here light and darkneſs do not ſucceed and roll after one another as they do in our world, but are diſtributed into proper ſtates and regions. For his enemies, there is a continual
Rev xxi. 23. *horror of darkneſs*, and for thoſe that are ſaved, there is *an inheritance with the ſaints in light*, where *their ſun ſhall no more go down; for there is no night there, but the glory of the Lord doth lighten the place, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

(4.) Theſe Myſteries are to be diffuſed and made known. The obligation to keep all ſecret which they learned at the temple of Epheſus, was cruel to the world, and could have no other influence than

than to bloat up with pride and vanity the people that had them. Thus they were rendered uſeleſs to the creation, and only cumbered the ground where they lived. SERM. 6.

But is Chriſtianity ſuch a *vain peculiar?* No; all they who have learned the things of God, are to let their *light ſhine before men.* They muſt *hold forth the word of life;* they are to be *blameleſs and harmleſs as the ſons of God without rebuke, ſhining as lights in the world.* Thus we read of *adorning the Goſpel of God our Saviour in all things.* The whole body of Chriſtians are *a royal prieſthood, a peculiar people, to ſhow forth the praiſes of him who has called them out of darkneſs into a marvellous light.* It is both their duty and inclination to call others into the grace wherein they ſtand. In this temper Chriſt is a pattern to them, *I have not hid thy righteouſneſs within my heart, I have not concealed thy faithfulneſs and thy truth.* Mat. v. 16. Phil. ii. 15, 16. Tit. ii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Pſ. xl. 10.

Thus may the Myſteries of Godlineſs be called *Great,* in oppoſition to the vain pretenſions of the Heathen. What they boaſted of was a needleſs toil, and very oft a grand impertinence. There were all the ſuſpicions of its being the artifice of thoſe that told it, and it left the people who received it as uſeleſs to the world as it found them. Whereas the Myſtery of Godlineſs is *great* from the preſent benefit that we have by it; from the relation that it bears to our whole felicity both in earth and heaven; from the characters of a divine original that are upon it; and from the diffuſion that it is to have abroad.

2. There were undeniable Myſteries among the Jews. God dealt with them as he had *not* done *with any other nation.* They were called to *remember the marvellous things that he had wrought, the wonders and the judgments of his mouth.* This was the peculiar duty *of the ſeed of Abraham his ſervant,* Pſ. cxlvii. 20. — cv. 5, 6.

SERM. 6. *ſervant, and the children of Jacob his choſen:* And yet in regard to theſe we may ſay, GREAT *is the Myſtery of Godlineſs.* There is a diſtinction that God himſelf has given between the wonders of the New Teſtament and thoſe of the Old: They are more continuing, they refer us to themſelves, they come in a nobler way, and are attended with a greater influence.

(1.) Our Myſteries are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe that God gave to the Jews, by their continuance. Heb. ix. 9. Theirs were only ſo many *ſigns for the time preſent:* —— xi. Ours, as the Apoſtle ſaith, are *not of this tabernacle.* The very Temple itſelf is called by that name, to ſhew that it was to be taken down: So that all the wonders of the *place within the vail,* of the mercy-ſeat upon the ark, and the Cherubims of glory ſhading it with their wings, were limited. The time would come when the Church of God ſhould have nothing further to learn by Gal. iii. 24. them. The law was but *our ſchoolmaſter to lead* ——— 25. *us to Chriſt,* and therefore we are *now no longer* Heb. ix. 12, *under a ſchoolmaſter.* But Chriſt is come, *an High-*13. *Prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, that is to ſay, not of this building; and not by the blood of bulls and goats,* which had only a temporary uſe, and a temporary ſignification, *but by his own blood he has entered into the holieſt of all, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

The High-Prieſt's going into the holy place once a-year, with the blood of others, was a proper emblem of the way in which the atonement was made, by an Officer of God's own appointing, and in a method that ſhowed his ſatisfaction: But now the ſenſe of ſuch a ceremony is all over: If it was to be repeated again, we could not underſtand it. Whereas the thing ſignified carries in it an eternal propriety, that *Chriſt having ſuffered for the*

the ſins of many, ſhould go, *not into the holy places* SERM. 6.
made with hands, which are the figures of the true, Heb. ix. 24.
but into heaven itſelf, there to appear in the preſence
of God for us. Here men die that receive tithes, —— vii. 8.
but there He receives them of whom it is witneſſed
that he lives. He is made not after the law of a —— 16.
carnal commandment, but after the power of an end-
leſs life. The Law makes men Prieſts that have in- —— 28.
firmity, but the Word of the Oath that is ſince the
Law, makes the Son, who is perfected *for evermore.* τετελειω-
He has obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how μένος.
much he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which Cha. viii. 6.
was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes: For if that 7, 8, 13.
firſt covenant had been faultleſs, there ſhould have
been found no place for the ſecond; for finding fault
with them, he ſaith, Behold the days come when I
will make a new covenant. In that he ſaith a new
covenant, he hath made the firſt old: Now, that
which decays and waxes old, is ready to vaniſh away.

(2.) Our Myſteries refer us to themſelves. The Jews' had a reſpect to ſomething elſe. Though God had appointed thoſe ceremonial atonements and purifications, yet that maxim muſt have been always true, that *it is not poſſible the blood of bulls* Heb. x. 4.
and of goats ſhould take away ſin. What proportion is there between the ſin of man and the blood of a brute? And much leſs can a ſacrifice be a ſuitable offering to the juſtice of Him who is a *Spirit,* and will be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth. But, as we are told the law had *a ſhadow of good things to come,* it ſtill carried on the thoughts and expectations of the people to *a better hope.* Their temple was a *glorious high throne,* as it was Jer. xvii. 12.
a figure of the body of Chriſt, in which *all the fulneſs of the Godhead* was to dwell. Their Mercy-Seat above the ark, was a type of our Throne of Grace. Their High-Prieſt, who had been *called of God,* was covered with an ephod, had a fair mitre

SERM 6. mitre upon his head, and a breaſtplate with the names of the children of Iſrael upon his heart.

Pſ. xlv. 8. This was a figure of Chriſt Jeſus, all whoſe *garments do ſmell with myrrh, aloes, and caſſia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made him glad.* Their ſacrifices were typical of his Death, and the Righteouſneſs that he ſhould bring in; their Jeruſalem, of our heaven. And without ſuch a reference as this, all their worſhip had been in vain. Hence the Apoſtle ſpeaks with a contempt of thoſe things that had once a divine inſtitution, partly becauſe their uſe was then over, and partly becauſe they had never any other than a relative goodneſs. Thus he calls it *a worldly ſanctuary,* and the worſhip there, *weak and beggarly elements, and carnal ordinances impoſed upon them till the time of the reformation.*

Heb. xi. 1. ver. 10.

Now the Myſteries of Chriſtianity never carry us beyond themſelves. We reſt in the great Redemption itſelf, that God ſhould be manifeſt in the Fleſh, and juſtified in the Spirit: There is no going any farther: Theſe are the very things that feed our faith, and extend our hope. This was *the hope of the promiſe made of God unto the Fathers, unto which the Twelve Tribes earneſtly ſerving God day and night hoped to come.*

Acts xxvi. 6, 7.

(3.) Our Myſteries come in a nobler way, in a method more agreeable to the lofty nature of a rational ſoul. God treats us now, in the New Teſtament, more like ſpiritual beings, than he uſed to do his ancient people. We have nothing ſo groſs as what the Apoſtle calls by the name of *carnal ordinances*, and the *rudiments of the world.* Their building of a temple was an emblem of the incarnation, their offering ſacrifices, of the great Atonement. And thus were their minds inſtructed about the method of God's reſtoring man to himſelf. But now he has ſtruck off all theſe carnal conveyances

ances from the doctrine, and made it known by a revelation that is pure and divine; ſo that, *what ſaith the righteouſneſs of faith? not, who ſhall go into heaven, to bring down Chriſt from above, or who ſhall deſcend into the deep to bring him from beneath? but the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. If thou believe with thy heart that Jeſus died, and confeſs with thy mouth that God raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* SERM. 6. Rom. x. 6.—10.

(4.) This Myſtery is attended with a greater influence, both as to purity and peace. *The law made nothing perfect*, it ſtill left them in a wrong way about their devotions, *but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which hope we now draw nigh unto God*, in a way that they could not uſe. So it was as to comfort. In their diſpenſation, *thoſe ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually, could never make the comers thereunto perfect; for then, would they not have ceaſed to be offered?* Yes ſurely, *becauſe the worſhippers once purged, ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins; but in thoſe ſacrifices, there is a remembrance made again of ſins every year.* Heb. vii. 19. x. 1, 2, 3.

It is otherwiſe in the Chriſtian Religion; for we are *ſanctified by the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all: Every prieſt ſtands daily miniſtring, and offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices, which can never take away ſins; but this Man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down at the right hand of God.* He had then done, and gone through the whole atonement. *Whereof the Holy Ghoſt is a witneſs to us, in ſaying, Their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remiſſion of theſe is, there is no more offering for ſin.* And the conſequence of the whole is, that *we have therefore boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all, by the blood of Jeſus.* ver. 10. Heb. vii. 11, 12. 15. 17, 18. 19.

[2.] It

SERM. 6. [2.] It is further ſaid, that this Myſtery is great *without controverſy*. There was room to diſpute the original of the Heathen wonders, thoſe which their prieſts gave out. Men who loved to enquire into things, could not be without their ſuſpicions, that fraud in the deſign, and confidence in the revelation, went a great way into thoſe pretenſions.

Jer. x. 7, 8. *Among all the wiſe men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms there is none like to our God; but they*

xvi. 19. *are altogether brutiſh and fooliſh. They inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.* But here is a Myſtery that all confeſs.—Under this head, I ſhall obſerve four things.

1. It does not mean there ſhould be no diſpute

1 Cor. ii. 14. about it. *The natural man* never did, and never will *receive the things of the Spirit of God; they are*

i. 18. *fooliſhneſs to him. The preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs.* The Scripture has foretold this; and it is but in our age, as it has been in thoſe before us; there is no new thing under the ſun. Three cauſes may be aſſigned for it.

Firſt, The enmity that there is in our nature to the things of God. Till we are a willing people, the light will be grievous to us. One dram of grace in the heart, is the beſt battery againſt all thoſe carnal reaſonings that we advance in oppoſition to the

2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Goſpel: This pulls down *the ſtrong holds and every imagination, and brings all our high thoughts that exalt themſelves againſt the knowledge of Chriſt*; in ſubjection to him. Our underſtandings are vitiated as well as our affections; and as there is a principle that ſaith of God's commands, *What a wearineſs is it!* ſo there is another that ſaith, what is as vile, of his doctrines, *They are fooliſhneſs, being only ſpiritually diſcerned.*

We ſee what pains people will take to ſhift off a duty, how many excuſes they find, what delays they run into, and how cunning and copious a corrupt nature

nature is to expreſs all its enmity againſt the au- SERM. 6.
thority of God. Thus laborious is our invention againſt a Myſtery. We will except, ſometimes to the ground of a revelation, ſometimes to the ſufficiency of it, and again to the uſe of it. Either it is not declared to us at all, or not with evidence enough, or it is an indifference whether we believe it or not. Thus much are people upon their guard againſt the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jeſus. If they cannot reſiſt, they will flee; when they cannot ſhut out a conviction, they will run away from it. Now, what can this be owing to, but the ill turn that we got by the fall? They who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, are *fulfilling the deſires of the* Eph. ii. 3.
mind as well as of the fleſh. It all proceeds from a hatred of God; and that is directed againſt his wiſdom, as much as his government. We can no more endure the light that is about his throne, than the greatneſs that fills his law. The firſt wickedneſs of our nature conſiſted in a love of ſome wiſdom that we were to get in our own way: From that time we have had a hatred of *the wiſdom that deſcends from above*, both as it is pure and as it is peaceable. So that, it is no wonder that *they who* Joh. iii. 20.
do evil hate the light; that the natural man who receives not the things of the Spirit of God, ſhould count them fooliſhneſs.

Secondly, The Scripture has given us another reaſon of this, and that is the influence of Satan. *If* 2 Cor. iv.
our Goſpel is hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; in 3, 4.
whom the god of this world has blinded the eyes of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of the inviſible God, ſhould ſhine into their hearts. He was an early enemy to our Lord; and what he was to his perſon, he will be to his doctrine. *The dragon was* Rev. xii.
wroth with the woman, and makes war with the 17.
remnant of her ſeed, which keep the commandment of

SERM. 6.

God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus. The ſerpent
2 Cor. xi. 3. *who beguiled Eve, through his ſubtilty* endeavours to *corrupt our minds from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.* Chriſt came to deſtroy Satan's empire, and therefore he takes the alarm, and does all that he can to reſiſt the glorious Invader. As it is by the Goſpel that a Redeemer rides in the chariots of ſalvation, ſo we may expect the enemy will uſe his endeavours to diſturb the wheels; ſometimes he does it by ſuperſtition, leading out the zeal of people into vain things that cannot profit; ſometimes he purRev. ii. 10. ſues his deſign by perſecution, *The devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days;* and ſometimes in a more direct onſet upon the great Myſteries of Godlineſs, teaching per2 Pet. ii. 1, ſons to *deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.*
Rev. xx. 8. *He ſhall go out, and deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.*

Thirdly, I believe a great deal of this oppoſition is owing to the terrors of an uneaſy conſcience. They dare not let this faculty look into the law of God, and therefore they ſet it a quarrelling with the Goſpel. Thus debauchery goes off into a wrangling. Theſe hard queſtions are a ball thrown to the conſcience, to keep it at play, and divert it from working and wounding within. It is for this reaſon, that ſeveral people who abhor the practice of religion, profeſs themſelves to be champions againſt its myſteries; and what a poor deluſion is this to ſecret qualms, that ſuch and ſuch a text is not in ſome ancient copies? What is that to thoſe who
Eph. ii. 12 *live as without a God in the world,* who *caſt off fear*
Job xv. 4. *and reſtrain prayer before God?* Is it not enough that they oppoſe Chriſtianity in their lives, but muſt they do it alſo in their profeſſion? It will be of no avail to them, another day, to plead the uncertain authority of ſome ſcriptures: That is no excuſe for

for ſwearing and immorality. All copies agree in the truth of theſe words, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, who taketh his name in vain.* SERM. 6. Deu. v. 11.

2. This Myſtery is without controverſy to all the ages of God's people. They have owned it, and have done ſo practically. This has kept them humble in their own eyes, and made them earneſt for *the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of* what they do not underſtand. *They have acknowledged the Myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.* This has given them a temper of love to others. Any one that looks into the great Doctrines of Salvation will own, that the more he ſees of their Myſtery the leſs he is capable of perſecuting thoſe that do not believe them. He finds the truth of the obſervation, *No man can ſay that Jeſus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.* He wonders not at the ignorance of people, and the oppoſition that riſes from it. It is only the grace of God that has made it otherwiſe with him. The Jews had *a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God. Even to this day when Moſes is read, the vail is upon their heart; and when they turn to the Lord, the vail ſhall be taken away.* Eph. i. 17. Col. ii. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Rom. x. 2, 3. 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.

A perſon that guards a Myſtery in the Chriſtian Religion with penal laws, knows nothing what belongs to it. He that will force the natural man to receive what he knows before-hand he cannot receive, is guilty of the ſame crime with Simon Magus; he thought the gift of God might be *bought*, and theſe think it may be *ſold*. This puniſhing of hereſy, and rewarding of orthodoxy, is not teaching the Chriſtian Religion as if it were myſterious. If we really apprehended, there was no knowing theſe things

SERM. 6. things till God himſelf had opened our eyes, we ſhould take every penal law to be a reproach upon him; and it is adding to the miſery of ſinners, if ſuch as he marks out for *darkneſs* in another world,
2 Tim ii. 24, 25, 26. are to ſuffer *perſecution* in this. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth; and that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

July 6. 1718.

SERMON VII.

3. THIS Myſtery is without controverſy to thoſe whom the grace of God has brought from the darkneſs of infidelity. They will ſay as Jacob
Gen. xxviii. 16. did, *Surely the Lord* was in this truth, *and I knew it not; this is the houſe of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* They give way to the ſweet excurſions of joy and wonder. What they uſed to deſpiſe as mere fooliſhneſs, poſſeſſes and fills their eſteem. And a teſtimony from ſuch people as theſe, ought the more to be valued, becauſe it ſhows us there is
Iſa. lii. 15. a conqueſt of their prejudice. *That which had not been told them, have they ſeen; and that which they had not heard, do they conſider.*

I will go no farther in the ſearch of examples than the New Teſtament, which may be called *the Book of the Wars of the Lord.* There we ſee what methods he took to ſhow his power, and proſper his love. We find that the bare preaching of the word, without

without any addition of force, temptation or intereſt, has ſunk down into the hearts of men. The *Jews* to whom the croſs was a *ſtumbling-block*, and the *Greeks* that called it *fooliſhneſs*, came to ſee that it was *the wiſdom of God, and the power of God.* I may give you one inſtance under each of theſe heads. SERM. 7. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

Of the former ſort, I look upon the ſtory of Saul to be the moſt eminent. His contempt of Chriſt was fortified with Jewiſh learning, and the prepoſſeſſion of a mighty zeal for the traditions of the fathers. *He perſecuted the Church of God above meaſure, and waſted it. He thought within himſelf that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. Many of the ſaints he ſhut up in priſon, and compelled them to blaſpheme.* This ſhews us what a turn his prejudice gave him; that he put theſe poor people upon denying and deriding the great doctrines of redemption. As they were *his* abhorrence, ſo he would make them *theirs. He was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, perſecuting this way unto the death, binding and delivering into priſons both men and women.* But what a renovation of judgment did he come under! He was brought to ſee the wiſdom of a deſign which before he hated. There was nothing that he ſo much valued as *the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord.* Formerly he ſaw no glory in this revelation: But now, *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt* are what he regards with an eſteem in himſelf, and what he thought it his honour to *preach among the Gentiles.* What he uſed to ſet at nought, he now endeavoured *to make all men ſee*, viz. *the fellowſhip of the Myſtery that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt.* And though he once thought it beneath Gal. i. 13. Acts xxvi. 9, 10, 11. Acts xxii. 3, 4. Phil. iii. 8. Eph. iii. 8. —— iii. 9.

the

SERM. 7. the ſtudy of men, yet now he ſees, *that unto the*
Eph. iii. 10. *principalities and powers in heavenly places muſt be made known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God.* He that was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and after the moſt perfect manner of the
1 Cor. ii. 2. law had been a Phariſee, deſires to *know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.* What he took for gain, he found to be loſs; yea he *counted all things loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord.* Here his thoughts were entertained and his affections employed. Though to him, as well as others, the things of the Spirit had been fooliſhneſs, yet from this intellectual antipathy, he comes to believe what he heard, to admire what he believed, and to improve what he admired; *following after, if he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.*

The other inſtance that I promiſed to give you, was from the Heathen; and you will find that the grace of God was *exceeding abundant towards them, with faith and love which are in Chriſt Jeſus.* Their learning bows itſelf, as Dagon did before the ark; it falls flat, and breaks to pieces. Though at Athens they had all the ſcorn that could be, for the perſon and doctrine of the Apoſtle, yet *ſome of them believed*, when they heard him more fully upon the revelation that he brought among them.
Acts xvii. 18. 31. They that called him a *babbler*, and a *ſetter forth of ſtrange gods*, are ſaid to *cleave unto him* upon his telling them, that *God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he has ordained, whereof he has given aſſurance to all men in that he raiſed him from the dead.* It was Jeſus and the Reſurrection which they called by the name of ſtrange gods before; and yet now they ſaw the wiſdom and empire of the Divine Nature in that contrivance; that it gave

gave us notions worthy of a God, and fitted to a ſoul. SERM. 7.

But the moſt eminent inſtance of this kind, we read of at Epheſus, where *the name of the Lord was magnified, and many that believed came and confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds: Many of them alſo who uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burnt them before all men, and they counted the price of them, and found it to be fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver; ſo mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.* The people here deſcribed, were got into ſuch an engaging ſtudy, as would give them an opinion that they had ſomething wiſer in their own keeping than theſe Apoſtles could teach them. And yet you ſee what havock and deſtruction the grace of God carried into all that ſort of learning. *They confeſſed and ſhewed their deeds;* that they were vain and vile, fooliſh and wicked: Nay, they *brought their books together,* as if they had agreed in a common act of reproach upon the ſcience itſelf: *They burned them before all men;* though with what expence and care they had collected them, you ſee by the price they came to, which was fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver, that is, about fifteen hundred pounds. If any people had it in their power to detect the weakneſs and fraud of the Chriſtian doctrine, it muſt be theſe men; and therefore when they give ſuch a public witneſs to the truth of religion, it comes after a fair trial. *They turned from idols to ſerve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jeſus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.* Theſe Epheſians are brought to *comprehend with all ſaints, what is the height, length and breadth, and depth, and to know the love of Chriſt that paſſes knowledge, and be filled with all the fulneſs of God.*

Acts xix. 17, 18, 19, 20.

1 Theſſ. i. 9, 10.

Eph iii. 18, 19.

4. This

SERM. 7.

4. This is a Myſtery without Controverſy, becauſe it ſtill continues to be a Myſtery after all the ways that men have taken to explain it. Our faith is often *beguiled by philoſophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and the commandments of men, and not after Chriſt.* We are in danger of being *ſpoiled* with it. There has been many an inſult upon Revelation from the fancies of men, but God has uſually blaſted them. They have ſet their threſhold by his threſhold, and their poſts by his poſt. They have caſt the doctrine of Religion into barbarous moulds. *From whence have we had our wars and fightings*, but from the luſts of the mind as well as thoſe of the fleſh? *The wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable.* The wiſdom of the ſchools is neither; firſt, It is muddy, earthy and polluted, and then it is fierce and quarrelſome.

Col. ii. 8.

Jam. iii. 17.

What a bandage of hard words have they given to the doctrine of Juſtification, till they have almoſt diſtinguiſhed it out of the Church? And after all their laborious niceties, it will never be better underſtood than by God's own account of it; that *he has ſet forth him to be a propitiation for our ſins, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs in the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, that God may be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believes in Jeſus.* There is more in one breath and ſentence of the Bible, than in all the voluminous diſputations that have raiſed ſuch a duſt in the world. That *he died, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God:* That *the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all:* That *the Meſſiah was cut off, but not for himſelf:* That *he bare the ſins of many:* That *God has in Chriſt Jeſus reconciled us to himſelf, not imputing our treſpaſſes to us, but made him to be ſin for us who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* Theſe are as plain

Rom. iii. 25, 26.

1 Pet. iii. 18.
Iſa. liii. 6.
Dan. ix. 26.
Iſa. liii. 12.
2 Cor. v. 19. 21.

plain as language can make the thing: The difficulty here, lies not in the words, but in the doctrine itſelf; and that being the counſel of God, it muſt be myſterious. We can never by ſearching find it out to perfection. But I am ſure the way to bring it down to our conceptions is not to ſtrip it of the phraſe that God has given it, and clothe it with our own. It is never the plainer for any of thoſe little arts. And we find by the *vain jangling* to which ſome turn aſide, that they *neither underſtand what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.* SERM. 7.

Explaining a Myſtery muſt be quite wrong. It is beſt to keep it in its own language, and not utter *words hard to be underſtood.* It is at leaſt a daring practice; not treating it as a Myſtery, but throwing it into a rumble of ſounds. For theſe reaſons, I could wiſh that ſaying had not obtained among Divines, that the Father is the *fountain of the Deity.* This is a nicety that we have *nothing in Scripture* to lead us into. It is being *wiſe above what is written,* and exerciſing ourſelves in *things too high for us.* After all the pains that men have taken to make theſe doctrines intelligible to reaſon, which is indeed to degrade them from their Myſtery, we ſee it is in vain: For ſtill, *without Controverſy* great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs. I have no more to do from this part of my ſubject, than to give you a few practical directions about the uſe that ſhould be made of myſteries in religion.

1. If you would treat Chriſtianity, or any particular article as a myſtery, be careful to ſeparate the doctrine from all the mixtures that curioſity or ſuperſtition have brought into it. Miniſters ſhould not come to you with *excellency of ſpeech or knowledge, in declaring to you the Goſpel of God.* It is certain that theſe matters could never be known, if the Spirit that ſearches all things had not revealed them. Our faith ſtands, *not in the wiſdom of man, but in the power of God.* 1 Cor. ii. 1.

SERM. 7. 2. Read the Scriptures diligently, comparing *ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.* Be able to know what phraſes are uſed there, and what are of foreign extraction. Where there is an awful darkneſs in one text, endeavour to ſee the way into it by the eaſier light of another. And obſerve the great deſign of Scripture, upon which God has put that book into your hands; take the general ſcope of it along with you. It is lamentable to ſee with what fury perſons can puſh their opinions, who are not able to bring one verſe of the Bible into their argument.

That there are difficulties in theſe *lively oracles*, is what we are not aſhamed to own. As they
1 Tim. vi. 16. come from a God *who only has immortality, and dwells in that light to which no man can approach;* as they conſiſt of matters that relate to an unſeen
2 Pet. iii. 16. world, it is no wonder that the *unſtable and ignorant do wreſt them to their own deſtruction*, and that the beſt believers are filled with a holy admiration. But I am far from thinking, that the deſign of revealing theſe things that are ſo *hard to be underſtood*, is that we may have a dependence upon our teachers, and receive all that they will pleaſe to give us. The learning of Miniſters is one of thoſe means that God has bleſſed to the enlightening of the world; a ſkill in the original languages, and an acquaintance with eaſtern cuſtoms, are mighty helps to find out the ſenſe of many paſſages: But it is plain that the Book is deſigned for all people. In the days of the Son of
Iſa. xxxv. 8. Man, it is promiſed, that *there ſhall be a way of holineſs ſo eaſy, that way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein.* The entrance of God's word gives a light that makes wiſe the ſimple. There is no neceſſity for all perſons to know the critical
1 Pet. ii. 2. meaning of every text: They may *deſire the ſincere milk of the word, and grow thereby.* They may ſee

ſee enough for their edification and comfort, though they are ſtill unacquainted with many beauties in the phraſe and argument. We know that the mere Bible itſelf, without any explanations, has been attended with a bleſſing. Thus it was at the Reformation; *many run to and fro* with a few leaves of the Book, and ſo *knowledge was increaſed.* Therefore, *let the word of God dwell richly in you.* It is thus that Miniſters *are made perfect, thoroughly furniſhed to every good work.* SERM. 7. Dan. xii. 4. 2 Tim. iii. ult.

3. Attend the ordinances of the Goſpel. *He that walks with wiſe men, ſhall be wiſe.* This method God has bleſſed for the *opening of our eyes, and turning us from darkneſs to light* I am no way ſurpriſed at the *ſtrong deluſions* that obtain among us; we ſee them in men that *receive not the love of the truth.* How ſhould they poſſibly be in the right, who throw off all worſhip, are *aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael, and live as without a God in the world?* The Apoſtle obſerves, *He that is of God hears us, he that is not of God hears not us; hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the ſpirit of error.* Thus in all ages were believers built up in their moſt holy faith. Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Theſſ. ii. 10. 1 Joh. iv. 6.

I do not tell you, (and I dare ſay there is not one among you ſuppoſes that I would be guilty of it), that you are to truſt any Miniſters by an implicit faith; but this liberty in yourſelves is no argument againſt the ordinances of the Goſpel. We are to *uſe our liberty as the ſervants of God.* It is obſerved of the Bereans, whoſe evangelical nobility can never be too much remembered and admired, that *they received the word with all readineſs of mind, though they ſearched the Scriptures daily whether the things were ſo or not.* When our bleſſed Saviour *received gifts for men,* among the reſt, *he gave them paſtors and teachers;* and this was *for the work of the miniſtry, for the perfecting of the ſaints,* 1 Pet. ii. 16. Acts xvii. 11.

for

SERM. 7.

Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14. *for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* We see by experience, that the humble Christian who waits at Wisdom's gates does visibly advance; there is in him a discernible

2 Pet. iii. ult. increase of *grace, and of the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* And, on the other hand, the brighter parts and greater learning of people, either deadens into dulness, or sours into error, when they neglect the means of improving it. *He that has, to him shall be given, and from him that has not, shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have.* The light that is in him shall be darkness, and then, *how great is that darkness?* If, therefore,

Heb. x. 23, 25. you would *hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, forsake not that assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works;* that ye may abound in wisdom, and increase more and more.

4. Pray for the Spirit. Though this is the greatest gift, yet you may ask it with the greatest hope.

Luk. xi. 13. For *if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Desire that by his light you may be conducted into the true sense of Scripture, and the real benefit of ordinances; that when you read the word of God, you may see the wondrous things contained in his law; and when you come into the assemblies of his people, you may *walk in the light*

1 Cor. ii. 12. *of the Lord. We have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may*

1 John ii. 20. *have the things that are given to us of God. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

In

In order to this, take care that you do not grieve the Spirit: This includes the utmoſt guard over your tempers, *laying aſide all malice and guile, and hypocriſy and evil-ſpeaking, receive the ſincere milk of the word.* An angry furious man is out of the way of truth and peace, becauſe he is doing violence to Him whoſe office it is to *lead us unto the way of all truth. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to wrath; for the wrath of man works not the righteouſneſs of God: Wherefore, lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and with meekneſs receive the ingrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.* We are bid to *ſpeak the truth in love,* not only as it is the beſt way of convincing others, but of nouriſhing ourſelves; for thus *we grow up unto him in all things, who is the head even Chriſt Jeſus.* A perſon who indulges himſelf in ungodly paſſions *holds the truth in unrighteouſneſs:* he ſtops the circulation in the myſtical body; he will be a withered branch; he does not derive faſt enough from Chriſt Jeſus; his ſoul cannot thrive in the courts of the Lord. He is like a thiſtle by the ſides of a vine, that may be ſaid to defend it, but draws no manner of virtue from it. Do you therefore believe that nothing but the Scripture is the rule, and none but the Holy Spirit is a ſufficient teacher, and that it is your utmoſt concern, not to forfeit and grieve away all the inſtruction that you ſtand in need of? *The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.* You muſt *buy* of Chriſt *gold tried in the fire, and anoint your eyes with his eye-ſalve, that you may ſee.*

SERM. 7.

1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

Jam. i. 19, 20, 21.

Eph. iv. 15.

Pſ. xxv. 9.

Rev. iii. 18.

5. Take care of quarrelling about theſe Myſteries, and *becoming vain in your imaginations.* The Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion were never given us, to furniſh a campaign. But *the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace, of them that make peace.*

Jam. iii. 18.

SERM. 7. *peace.* They are not only of a ſublime but an uſeful nature. As, for example, it is a very little matter to be trained up in the beſt way of conceiving and delivering the Doctrine of Juſtification; to do it without the fraud of heretics, and the traſh of ſchoolmen: This will be of no conſequence to one who is yet in his ſins, and has the wrath of God abiding on him. It is more my buſineſs to have the privilege than barely to know the truth, that
Heb. vi. 18. I may have *ſtrong conſolation in fleeing for a refuge to the hope that is ſet before me.* It was a great thing
Luke xviii. 14. that our Saviour ſaid of the publican, that *he went down to his houſe juſtified.* Carrying the mercy of juſtification along with us, is more than carrying away the doctrine. The main thing is to have it
Pſal. xxxii. 1, 2. go with us to our houſes. *Bleſſed is he whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered: Bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.* God has revealed to us the way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, not to ſet us a quarrelling about the man-
Phil. iii. 8, 9. ner of declaring it, but that we may *win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having on our own righteouſneſs which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of the Son of God.*

6. Be more concerned about the improving of a myſtery than the explaining it. Enquire upon a head of Revelation, not only, what is there for me
2 Theſ. ii. 10. to *know*, but what is there for me to *do? Receive the love of the truth; that you may be ſaved.* What a poor buſineſs would it have been for Noah's ſons to fall a diſputing about the ſhape and convenience of the ark, when the waters were rolling after them? Their concern was to get within it, and ſo to be ſaved. This practical way of regarding a truth, is the means of giving you a greater knowledge. As
Joh. vii. 17. our Saviour obſerves, *if any man does his will, then ſhall he know the doctrine, whether it is of God, or I ſpeak of myſelf.* If what God has revealed to you about

about his nature is myſterious, let it employ your adoration. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! Who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has been his counſellor? For of him, and to him, and through him are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* SERM. 7. Rom. xi. 33, 34, 36.

SERMON VIII.

July 20. 1718.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

———*The Myſtery of* GODLINESS.

THIS word gives us the third general character of the Chriſtian Religion. The firſt was, that it is the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, what the faith of mankind may rely upon with confidence: And the ſecond is like unto it, that it is *a Myſtery*, to employ all your affections of delight and wonder: And, now, leſt any people ſhould think they are only to be confuſed with airy ſpeculations, we are told, in the third place, that it reaches the *Practice*, and fills our duty as well as our thoughts. It is to make us wiſer and better, and hence it is called the Myſtery of *Godlineſs:* Which takes into it theſe three things:

1. It agrees to the main deſign of Godlineſs.
2. It has a tendency to promote it; nay,
3. It has the beſt influence upon it. And in each of theſe particulars, it is diſtinguiſhed from thoſe myſteries that are not of Divine original; ſuch as wicked men have contrived, and fooliſh ones believed.

SERM. 8. ved. Their coming is *after the working of Satan,*
2 Theſ. ii. 9, 10, 11. *with all powers and ſigns and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in thoſe that periſh;* upon whom *God has ſent ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie.*

1. There is nothing in the Myſteries of religion inconſiſtent with holineſs to God, and beneficence to men. They are not contrived to take people off from their duty, to make them vain in themſelves, and uſeleſs to others. There is not one principle of piety or charity that ſuffers by them. They do not break in upon any *law of liberty.* And this is more than can be ſaid of the lying *wonders* that ſome have obtruded upon us.

In this compariſon I will not lead you very far abroad, but give you a view of the Chriſtian religion and thoſe Myſteries that are in it, as they appear to be of quite another nature from the inventions of men. The oppoſite inſtance that I ſhall bring, is the doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation.* I have frequently heard and read that boaſt of the Papiſts, that there is as good an argument for this, as there is for the *Trinity*; and that no objection can lie againſt the one, which may not with as much force be applied againſt the other. This I think may be eaſily diſſolved, if it was not out of the way of my ſubject. I could ſhow you, that there is a great difference between eſtabliſhing a doctrine by the decrees of men, and receiving it upon the plain grounds of a Revelation; and that it is much eaſier to find a ſimilitude or a metaphor in that ſaying, *This is my Body*, than it can be in the other, *Theſe three are One*; and that in a caſe which is plainly within the reach of my ſenſes, I may ſafely uſe them, but when the matter is confeſſedly above them, I ought to believe without them: Becauſe
1 Tim. vi. 16. this is what *no man either has ſeen or can ſee.* But as I ſaid, the purſuit of thoſe anſwers would make me wander too far from my text.

I

SERM. 8.

I will therefore run the compariſon between the two doctrines, upon the head of their conſiſtence with practical religion. It is eaſy to ſee how much the peace and purity of my life are promoted by a belief of this, that *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and that theſe three are one:* That *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, and juſtified in the Spirit.* The Divinity of a Saviour is a mighty argument for the dependence of my ſoul upon him. It is from this, that I can truſt in his merit, and be always looking at his interceſſion; becauſe, *as he continues for ever, he has an unchangeable prieſthood.* On this account we perform our duty to him with the reſt of his people, *calling on the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, both their Lord, and ours.* We are *under the law to Chriſt.* If he was not God, I would not *honour the Son as I honour the Father*, nor as *I believe in God, ſo believe in him.* There could be no peace of conſcience without a ſenſe of pardon and the hopes of a protection: Now, *He is therefore able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him, ſeeing that he ever lives to make interceſſion for them.* And the ſame happy concluſions may be argued from the Divinity of the HOLY SPIRIT. He that *creates us anew in Chriſt Jeſus*, He that *comforts us in all our tribulations*, He that *helps our infirmities* in prayers, He that *guides us into the land of uprightneſs*, can be no leſs than a God. In theſe caſes we are ſaid to be *all taught of God.* If that is his title, I cannot over-do it in my expectations from him. He is *able to make all grace abound towards me.* I believe a victory over my corruptions, as well as a pardon for them: That though all *my pains* cannot deſtroy the ſeeds of pride and paſſion and worldly mindedneſs, yet *the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. We are changed from glory to glory by this Spirit of the Lord.*

1 Joh. v. 7.

Heb. vii. 24.

1 Cor. i. 2.
—ix. 21.

Joh. v. 23.
—xiv. 1.

Heb. vii. 25.

Eph. ii. 10.
2 Cor. i. 4.
Rom. viii. 26.
Pſ. cxliii. 10.

2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

SERM. 8.

But now, What is there of this in the doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation?* What am I better for it, either in my hope or practice? Do not we plainly ſee that it eats out all religion? There is more adoration paid to the conſecrated wafer, than there is to any thing elſe; bowing before it, looking upon it, giving it the loweſt homage: Now, this is more than is owing even to the body of Chriſt Jeſus himſelf; *That* was never the object of a religious reverence, being no other than a creature. So that, though the words of the New Teſtament were to be taken in the *Popiſh ſenſe*, they would not put us upon any act of adoration. Saying *This is my Body*, is no argument for me to fall down before it, unleſs he had ſaid, This is my Divinity; here I am *as a God*. Calling it *his Body*, expreſſes no more than the human nature: And, therefore, if it is poſſible to change the Bread into *That*, yet it is idolatry to bow down before it. So that this myſtery of *theirs*, ſtrikes at the root of all practical religion, by giving divine worſhip to *that which is not God*. And the conſequence of this is the drawing off their thoughts, their joy, their dependence, from the infinite Nature, where alone they ought to be fixed.

1 Pet. i. 21. Heb. ix. 14

It is ſaid of the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus, *that by him we believe in God*, that *he offered himſelf to God*. But this practice is in them, as well as the Heathen, a

Rom. i. 25.

worſhipping and ſerving the creature more than the Creator, who is over all God, bleſſed for evermore. He tells us in the ſecond commandment, that he is a *jealous God;* and it is upon this very conſideration that the Apoſtle argues againſt all human fancies

1 Cor x. 21, 22.

at *the Lord's table: Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy, are we ſtronger than he?* Shall we *even there* proſtrate ourſelves to any but the Moſt High? Shall we make an idol of the greateſt bleſſing that he has given us; and defraud him of the honour that is due to himſelf alone, for the ſake of that lower nature, that he was pleaſed to take upon him? Thus

you

you see, how the belief of this doctrine, and the whole practice of their church, are inconsistent with that principle that lies at the heart of all religion, That God alone is to be worshipped. SERM. 8.

2. The doctrines of Christianity have a tendency to promote all Godliness. They are given upon that very design. In another place it is called *the doctrine according to Godliness*, that is, framed by the same model with it. These things are revealed on purpose to turn *our feet into the way of peace, to give light unto them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.* Nay, besides the homage that must be paid to God, we have a mysterious religion that makes us useful to the world. You see upon what view *life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.* He there lays down the original principle of Revelation, that *the love and kindness of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy has he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that we being justified by his grace, may be heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* And what is all this for? Only to throw us into a method of individual piety? No; but to make us of service to others. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, may be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.* The reason he gives, in the next words, why we are to *avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and strivings about the law,* is because *they are unprofitable and vain:* They do no manner of good.

1 Tim. vi. 3.

Luke i. 79.

Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

This may be truly affirmed of *Transubstantiation;* it is an *useless* Mystery, as much against *Peace upon earth,* as it is against *Glory to God in the highest.* It shows *no good will towards men,* but is plainly a *cloak of covetousness,* for a Priest first to lead you into

SERM. S. into the dark, and then to rob you. It *changes the*
Rom. i. 23. *glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man.* The manner of preſſing it,
Jam. iii. 17. is, like itſelf, *unchriſtian, earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh.* They do not recommend it as they would the *wiſdom that deſcends from above;* for that being
—— 17. *firſt pure,* it would be alſo *peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.* Whereas, there never was, that I can hear, any common temper ſhown in the ſervice that is paid to this pretended body of Chriſt: They *ſpeak perverſe things* about it; human decrees have eſtabliſhed it upon human penalties; it is ſafer contradicting any article of religion than *that.* Inquiſitions, that carry in their bowels all the varieties of cruelty, are a trench ſet about this doctrine.

If they would *diſpute about the body of Jeſus,* as
Jude 9. Michael the Archangel did *about the body of Moſes,* they muſt *bring no railing accuſation;* but they uſe worſe language to their brethren, than he did to the devil. It is very different from the methods of the Goſpel, when objections are anſwered by racks and fires. Nay, where the laws have reſtrained them from theſe ſeverities, there cannot be a proceſſion of the Hoſt, without a *church mob,* inſulting all thoſe that do not come into their idolatry. And what a confuſed aſſembly muſt that be, that are zealous both in adoration and violence; that is equally a houſe of Prayer, and a den of Thieves? One party falling down themſelves, and another party knocking down others; and this in the greateſt ſolemnity of their worſhip? As if a more extraordinary devotion could not be carried on, but in this jumbled way, by the ſuperſtition of their bigots, and the inſolence of their bullies. Their proceſſion in celebrating his death, is not unlike that of the Jews in
Mat. xxvi. contriving it. *Judas one of the twelve came, and*
47. *with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts and elders of the people.* Such offerings

offerings as these, are fitter for *Moloch* than for *Jesus*. The former indeed allowed all this, but of the latter it is observed that his carriage was the reverse to these riotous devotions, for *he did not strive, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets*. And he will be served in his own way. The Apostle gave a very different account of himself from what these sons of violence can pretend to, *They found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult*. These confusions are the fruits of that vile doctrine, and by their fruits we are to know them. SERM. 8. Mat. xii. 19. Acts xxiv. 18.

3. The Mysteries of religion have not only a tendency to promote Godliness, but they give the best influence to it. It never prospers so well as under the impressions of this faith. *It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing; these words of God, they are spirit and they are life*. Morality without revelation, is starved and withered; it wants either more vigour or more comfort. But *they that are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God*. Here I shall endeavour to do these two things: Joh. vi. 63. Ps. xcii. 13.

1. Give you some account of this Godliness; and,

2. Show you how the Mysteries of Religion have a happy influence upon it.

(1.) What is the Godliness here mentioned? Looking into this will give us an argument for those doctrines that promote it. If we find, that the practice they put us upon is the most useful to ourselves and others, we shall the more esteem them. I take the word εὐσέβεια to be of great extent, and to include the whole of our duty, though it has the nearest relation to what lies between us and God. In particular, it signifies our worship of him, our likeness to him, our communion with him, our expectations from him, our regard to his institutions, our love to his people, and our usefulness to his

SERM. 8. his creatures. Theſe are ſo many beauties of holineſs, and ornaments of practice. *He that in theſe things ſerves Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men:* And you will find they ſink and die when we abate of our reliſh for the Myſteries of Religion. No ſort of people are ſo groſsly deficient in their morals, as they that deſpiſe the Doctrines of Chriſtianity.

Rom. xiv. 18.

1. One article of Godlineſs, and indeed the chief of them is, that we ſhould bow down, *and worſhip, before the Lord our Maker.* When God looked from heaven, upon that enquiry, to *ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek him,* the report is, that *They are altogether become filthy, there is none that does good, they eat up his people as they eat bread, and do not call on the Lord.* It is the unhappineſs of the Heathen world, that they are *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them:* Or, if *they know God, they glorify him not as God, but become vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart is darkened.* Our Saviour tells the Samaritans, that *they worſhipped they know not what.* But the moſt lamentable account is that which the Apoſtle gives, that theſe people are *without Chriſt, aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without a God in the world:* paying no reſpect to him who was their Author and will be their Judge; never *feeling after him, if haply they might find him:* But acting as if they carried brutal ſouls in human bodies.

Pſ. xcv. 6.
—xiv. 2, 3.
Eph. iv. 18.
Rom. i. 21.
Joh. iv. 22.
Eph. ii. 12.

This is the firſt thing that the Grace of God does, it brings us to our knees. *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* was the cry of thoſe who a little before were hardened againſt all ſalvation, and had the utmoſt contempt of the means that God appointed for it. The jailor, whoſe conſcience was covered with a brawnineſs from his calling, comes trembling with the ſame queſtion. It is obſerv-

Acts ii. 37.

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ed of Saul, that he quickly fell to this work; *Behold* SERM. 8.
he prays. It may be, they who led him by the hand Acts ix. 11.
to Damascus, knew not what he was doing; they only beheld him a miserable object, a moving spectacle that could not lie, and durst not eat for three days and three nights; but in this heavy darkness he found his way to the throne of grace. His desires were feeding and fetching from Above, though he made such a sad figure to those about him.

This is Godliness: *If you call on the Father, who* 1 Pet. i. 17.
without respect of persons will judge every man according to his work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, as those that are *born not of the corruptible seed, but the incorruptible.* This is the great business of religion, to *seek the Lord whilst he* Isa. lv. 6.
may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near. There is no piety without this. Let not any deceive themselves; religion does not consist so much in talking of God, as in talking to him. *With my* — xxvi. 9.
soul have I desired thee in the night, saith the Prophet, *and with my spirit within me I will seek thee early. The way of the just is uprightness;* that is, his habit, his choice, his course, his inclination; and *thou most upright, dost weigh the path of the* —— 7.
just. It is under thy notice, and it is directed to thy throne. There are all manner of considerations that should move us to this; the debt we owe to a Creator, the necessity that is upon us from the daily deficiencies of life, and more especially the interest of immortality in another world, which can be pursued in no better a way. All these the grace of God sets home. Those people may be supposed to *cast off fear, who restrain prayer before* Job xv. 4.
God. It is this duty that the principles of the Christian Doctrine are to promote.

2. Our likeness to God. Godliness is God's likeness. This may be considered both as the cause and the effect of the other. Our conformity to him makes us serve him, for *how shall two walk* Amos iii. 3.
together

SERM. 8.

together except they be agreed? and our ſervice
2 Cor. iii. 18. makes us more like him; *We look through a glaſs, and are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory.* It is the command that he has laid down,
1 Pet. i. 16. 1 Joh. iii. 3. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* And *he that has this hope in him, will purify himſelf, even as he is pure.*

The beſt influence to this, comes from the principles of the Chriſtian Doctrine. The cleareſt view that we can have of the divine perfections, is from
Joh. i. 18. a *God manifeſt in the fleſh. No man has ſeen the Father at any time, but the only Begotten, who is in the boſom of the Father, he has revealed him.* In
Col. i. 15. him we have *the image of the inviſible God.*

This is a true and noble notion of religion, that it is a conformity to him that made us. *We are his workmanſhip, created anew in Chriſt Jeſus unto*
Eph. iv. 23, 24. *good works. We put on the new man, in the image of him that created us.* Some ſort of people are fond of being *called gods.* They would gladly ſuppoſe themſelves to have his *power;* but it would be more their intereſt to imitate his purity and goodneſs. Supremacy and Infallibility are not what
Pſ. cxlvii. 5. he has imparted to any. *Great is our Lord and of great power, his underſtanding is infinite.* Theſe we are not to learn of him; but he has propoſed his other attributes to our eſteem and practice, to be gracious, holy, juſt, and true. It is only in this
Mat. v. 48. ſenſe, that we are to be *perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect.*

3. Godlineſs conſiſts in a communion with God;
Cant. viii. 7. which is the exchange of *love*, between him and us. We delight ourſelves in his great goodneſs; and the ſatisfaction we receive from his love as a bounty, is returned to him as an offering. On his part, this is promoted by engaging our graces, pouring afreſh into our comforts, and drawing us out after himſelf. On our part, it is purſued in deſires towards him; admirations of him, for the glory of his nature, the lowneſs of his condeſcenſion; for what

what he is, and what he does. It sometimes rises into joyful assurances that he is ours and we are his; and these are still more powerful as the soul flies up with them into a better world, where we are not only to have a glory *from* Christ, but a glory *with* him. SERM. 8.

This satisfaction may well be called Religion, because it comes no other way. These are joys that no stranger intermeddles with. If our joys are separated from a life of holiness, humility and peace, they are false, and counterfeit. An angry passionate favourite, is a contradiction; God indulges no pettish children in his family; though he may not cast them out of the house, yet he carries it with a coldness to them. I have known some Christians very courageous in dangers, and very liberal in charities, who have scarce enjoyed a common peace within, because of a sour and morose temper. The Apostle saith, *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing.* God usually deals with his own children as they do with others. *With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.* Nothing more *grieves the Spirit of God* than the rising of an inward passion. If you would be *sealed to the day of redemption*, you must *put away clamour, and malice, and anger, and evil-speaking.* This is Religion; and it is a delightful part of it, to *seek the Lord and his strength, to seek his face evermore, that your heart may live for ever. It is good*, saith David, *for me to draw nigh unto God. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise him with joyful lips.* 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Ps. xviii. 25, 26. Eph. iv. 30, 31. Ps. cv. 4. lxxiii. 28. lxiii. 5.

4. This same Godliness takes into it our expectation from God. *We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But then do we hope, if we* Rom. viii. 24, 25.

SERM. 8. *with patience wait for it.* Moſt of our dealings with God are about things to come. We deſire he would give us our *daily bread, and forgive us our debts*, and not ſuffer us to be *led into temptation;* Tit. ii. 13. but in all this we are *looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* When our hearts are *directed* 2 Theſſ. iii. 5. *into the love of God*, it is alſo into a *patient waiting for the coming of Chriſt.* We have not yet received our portion: He that has put us among the 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. 4. children, will give us a delightful heritage. *We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened:* 6, 7, 8. And it will be thus with us, till we are *clothed upon with our houſe that is from heaven. We walk by faith and not by ſight;* and therefore *whilſt we are at home in the body we muſt be abſent from the Lord.* We are waiting to *ſee the King in his beauty*, and be brought into the land that is now afar off.

There is, and perhaps there always will be, ſome dread of death. The breaking down of this tabernacle is an act of violence. Sickneſs has an awful way of pulling out the pins, and taking the frame to pieces. We ought to uſe all means for lengthening of life: It is not only the voice of nature, but of religion. For which reaſon I cannot but think, that a late author, in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, has miſrepreſented the primitive Chriſtians about their zeal in puſhing on martyrdom; that was no buſineſs of theirs. We have but two examples in the Bible of good men deſiring to die rather than live, and each of them are blamed for it.

Nevertheleſs, as *the living know that they ſhall die*, ſo there can be no religion that does not keep Phil iii. 20. up a trade with another world. *Our converſation* 1 Pet. i 13. *is in heaven.* We are *waiting for the grace that ſhall be brought to us at the revelation of Jeſus* Heb. ix. 28. *Chriſt. We look for his ſecond appearance.* Our 2 Cor. iv. 18. eyes are taken off from *things that are ſeen, which are*

are but temporal, and fixed upon *those that are not seen, which are eternal.* SERM. 8.

5. Godliness takes into it our regard to the Divine institutions. We must *call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable.* People may abound with arguments against the obligation of the command, and strive to bend their judgment to their practice; but the grace of God teaches us to look upon it as an *accepted time,* and *a day of salvation.* There is no worship of God, but in the way that he has appointed. We are to *continue* not only *in the Apostles doctrine,* but *in their fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers.* Therefore that person gives himself a liberty of using *vain words,* who talks of Christianity, and yet can *turn away his ear from hearing the law, finding his pleasure on God's holy day.* They that are above ordinances, are above grace. The generation of seekers enquire where God may be found. He has been known by the breaking of bread, and *manifested the good savour of his knowledge by preaching:* And upon this practice the mysteries of religion have a powerful influence. Isa. lviii. 13. Acts ii. 42, 46.

6. Godliness takes into it our love to godly people. There must be a social religion; *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but considering one another to provoke unto love and good works, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.* The temper that teaches supercilious language, *Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou,* is so far from being right, that it gives God the quickest offence; *These are a smoak in his nose, and a fire that burns all the day.* The grace of God gives us a similitude both to him that made us, and to those who have obtained the like precious faith with us. All the whims of Popery that separate people from the conversation of the world, and throw them into a morose retirement, are as unchristian as they are inhuman. And therefore we ought to abhor them Heb. x. 25. Isa. lxv. 5.

as

SERM. 8. as ways of making us uſeleſs, or at the beſt, like
Hoſ. x. 1. Iſrael, *an empty vine* that brought forth *fruit to itſelf.*

7. Our uſefulneſs to thoſe who are *yet without*, is no ſmall part of religion. To this we have the example of our gracious God, who cauſes his ſun to ſhine upon the juſt and the unjuſt. As he was mindful of us in our low eſtate, ſo ſhould we be of
Rom. v. 6. 8. others: *When we were without ſtrength, and yet*
Pſal. lxviii. 18. *ſinners, Chriſt died for the ungodly. He received gifts, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* As you have been as bad as they, how do you know but they may in time be as good as you? and if it is not ſo, there muſt be the utmoſt care to preſerve the ways of God in full reputation, that they may have *no evil thing to ſay*
Jam. i. 27. *of you.* This is Godlineſs, *pure religion and undefiled before God and our Father, to viſit the fatherleſs and the widow, and to keep yourſelves unſpotted from the world.* A good man is an uſeful one.
Phil. ii. 15, 16. The ſons of God are *blameleſs and harmleſs, without rebuke, in the midſt of a corrupt and perverſe generation, among whom they are as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.*

SERMON IX.

August 3. 1718.

(2.) WE ſhall now enquire how this Godlineſs, as it comprehends our duty to God and our beneficence to man, is promoted by the Myſteries of Religion. How do theſe things fill us with reverence and a godly fear; and teach us to *do juſtice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?* I might conſider the two branches of holineſs apart, and let you ſee that they are both of them

them much improved by the doctrines of the Gospel: That *the grace of God which brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly* as to ourselves, *righteously as* to our neighbour, and *godly* in the acts of devotion; and that these beauties of practice are all maintained and heightened by our *looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a people that are zealous of good works.* SERM. 9. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

But I shall not consider these things asunder. I will only give you a few particulars, in which you will see, there could be no approach to God, and no true service to men, if our Religion was not so mysterious as infinite Wisdom has appointed it: That is, if GOD was not *manifest* in the Flesh, *justified* in the Spirit, *believed* on in the World, and *received* up into Glory. It is only by this that we know of a way opened to the throne of Grace. It is thus that we are filled with a reverence for the Divine Majesty; by these means he creates the principle of *our* love, which is no other than a return of gratitude to *his:* We find by experience that this makes the worship of God our delight and pleasure: In this we have the greatest examples of our duty, are most inspired with hope, filled with charity to those with whom we differ, and a true value for them with whom we agree. Thus it appears that Christianity is a Mystery of Godliness; that it forms and adorns the practice of those that believe it. There are none of its doctrines which do not infuse into these rules, that life that makes them more powerful and pleasant.

1. Were it not for these Mysteries, we could not have had an open way to the Throne of Grace. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*, and yet *without this faith*, which supposes a Revelation, *it is impossible to please God.* It seems to be the universal Heb. xi. 1. —— 6.

language

SERM. 9. language of our nature, that *all fleſh have ſinned*
Rom. iii. 23. *and fallen ſhort of the glory of God.* We cannot but fear that he is a God of truth and without iniquity. Theſe are the eternal glories of his nature, without which he could not be the object of our reverence, and ſinners cannot think of them without
Pſ. cxliii. 2. a dread. *In thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.* This ever was, and ever will be, the painful query
Mic. vi. 6, 7. of an awakened conſcience, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf to the moſt high God?* For this ſome people will ſtick at no expence or cruelty: *Shall I come with thouſands of rams, and ten thouſand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firſt born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul?* In theſe ſorrowful confuſions muſt they have wandered to the end of the world, if God had not revealed his love, and ſhowed them better ways of approach than ever they could have thought
Eph. iii. 11, 12. of; *according to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, in whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him.*

We could not come to God as Adam did, who had two things to recommend him, the purity of
Iſa. lxiv. 6. his nature, and the perfection of his obedience. *We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteouſneſs as filthy rags.* Our perſons are vile, and our actions
Job xiv. 4. provoking. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* The Angels who were our companions in Paradiſe became the terrible guards of the place, and enemies to the old inhabitants. There
Gen. iii. 24. was no getting by that *flaming ſword that turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life.* And therefore, as all the former paſſages were blocked
Heb. x. 20. up, God is ſaid to *conſecrate a new and a living way through the vail, that is the fleſh* of Chriſt. To this he has given a conſecration; he has made it *holy.* Our inventions at the beſt were uncertainties; whether they would do or no, we could not tell; but upon this way he has put a royal ſtamp. It is what his

his own holineſs has opened. Then it is a *new way*, SERM. 9.
as diſtinguiſhed from that which our iniquity had cloſed up: And laſtly, it is *a living way*, as it gives life to thoſe that come into it, and as it endures for ever.

Now all this is brought about by the firſt branch of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh.* Without that we muſt for ever have continued in the ſtate of our firſt parents, driven out from God; from the habitation of his holineſs, from a concern with his love, and any further expectations of his bounty. Nay, our caſe would have been the ſame with that of devils. They are better at contriving ways of return to God, than we can pretend to, and yet it is paſt all their cunning to find out any door of hope. But *having left their habitations* once, they have left them for ever, and are *reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs to the judgment of the great day.* Jude 6.

The reaſon why it is not ſo with us as it is with them, muſt be all reſolved into thoſe things that we call the Myſtery of Religion; that *God has ſent forth his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh;* that he is *the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by him. Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand.* He has joined the two main principles of natural and revealed religion together, that *there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus.* Without this there muſt have been an eternal bar in our way; for *God hears not ſinners;* he is of *purer eyes than to behold iniquity, or look on them that do evil.* And what does this conclude for us, but that we have no hope, and muſt live as without a God in the world. Had it not been for our High-Prieſt, who is gone by his own blood into the holy place, we could not have come with *boldneſs to the mercy-ſeat, in hopes* Rom. viii. 3. Joh. xiv. 6. Rom. v. 1, 2. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Joh. ix. 31. Hab. i. 13. Heb. iv. 16.

of

SERM. 9. *of obtaining mercy and finding grace to help in every time of need.*

2. Another principle of Godlineſs which the Myſteries of Religion do improve, is a reverence of the Divine Majeſty. I need not ſtay to argue the neceſſity of approaching in this manner to infinite Perfection. *Great fear is due unto the Lord in the aſſembly of his ſaints, and he is to be had in reverence of all that are about him:* But my particular aim under this head, is to ſhow you, that the revelation he makes of himſelf in the Goſpel, gives the moſt uſeful impreſſions upon every man's conſcience. *If thou ſhouldſt mark iniquity, who could ſtand? But there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayſt be feared: Who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee, and to thy faithfulneſs round about thee! We have obtained a kingdom that cannot be moved, and therefore have grace to ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and a godly fear.* The *promiſes* that we have received, engage us to *perfect holineſs in the fear of God.*

Pſ. lxxxix. 7. Pſ. cxxx. 3, 4. —lxxxix 8. Heb. xii. 28. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

He never makes ſuch an awful appearance as in the ſcheme of redemption. They that ſing the ſong of Moſes, and of the Lamb, ſay, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints; who ſhall not fear thee and glorify thy name!* His riding upon the clouds, and having his way in the whirlwind and in the ſtorm, is not ſo much as his *dwelling between the Cherubims. He is terrible out of his holy places*, from whence he *gives ſtrength and power to his people.* When he *rules the raging of the ſea, and ſtills the waves thereof;* when he *broke Rahab in pieces as one that is ſlain, and ſcattered his enemies with a ſtrong arm*, they were mighty things; but the *Juſtice and Judgment* by which our redemption is brought about, *are the habitation of his throne*, the attributes that dwell in his glory; *Mercy and Truth ſhall go before his face.* When it is ſaid of

Rev. xv. 3, 4. Pſ. lxviii. 35. —lxxxix. 9, 10.

our

our Lord, that *men ſhall be bleſſed in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed*, the pious remark upon it is, *Bleſſed be the Lord God, the God of Iſrael, who only doth wondrous things.* We find in fact, that no people are ſo touched with a ſenſe of his majeſty as they who have been enquiring after a ſhare in his love. SERM. 9. Pſ. lxxii. 17, 18.

The dread that mankind are ſtruck into by the noiſe of ſtorms and thunder, deſerves not the name of devotion. *They that dwell in the uttermoſt parts are afraid of his tokens*, but this does not lead them to worſhip. No perſon does rightly believe that *God is*, but one that believes he *is the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* We cannot ſuppoſe that Iſaiah was unacquainted with thoſe arguments that are fetched out of nature in proof of the Divine Perfections, and the duty we owe to them; and yet he is moved by a viſion of another ſort. He *ſaw the Lord upon a throne high and lifted up.* If an Evangeliſt may be the interpreter of a Prophet, the Lord that he ſaw was the Lord Redeemer, for *thoſe things ſaid Eſaias when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him. His Train filled the Temple*, which ſhows that he came to reſtore the worſhip of God, to eſtabliſh a correſpondence between heaven and earth. In this deſign he was *ſeen of Angels*; He is adored by them in the higher apartments of his houſe. *Above it*, i. e. above this throne, *ſtood the Seraphims; each one had ſix wings, with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. One cried to another*, or, as the Hebrew word is, *this cried to this*, they handed the adoration round, put it into an eternal circle, *ſaying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* Nay, the very unfeeling parts of nature receive the impreſſion of this greatneſs, *the poſts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the houſe was filled with ſmoke.* Pſ. lxv. 8. Heb. xi. 6. Iſa. vi. 1. Joh. xii. 41. Iſa. vi. 2, 3.

SERM. 9. This was a happy viſion to the Prophet, becauſe thence he concluded, that the purpoſe of redemption held good: That here was a ſufficient attendance of Angels, and the diſplay of a God to make it effectual. But inſtead of talking over thoſe joys that he is ſuppoſed to feel, he looks upon it as the moſt awful appearance of Divinity. He is preſently filled with a ſenſe of his vanity and wickedneſs; of every diſtance between him and a God ſo great and ſo holy. *Then ſaid I, Wo is me, for I am undone.* What! does he think himſelf undone by the viſions of grace and mercy? No! I do not take that to be the cry of deſpair; but this was ſuch a repreſentation of God in his power and his purity, as he had never met with before. *I am of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have ſeen the King the Lord of Hoſts.* Had he never ſeen him before, in his works of nature and providence? Was this the firſt time that he thought him to be the Lord of Hoſts, Lord of the armies in heaven, and the inhabitants on the earth? No; but the Divine Majeſty was never ſo opened to him as in the diſcloſure of a Redeemer.

We need look no farther than our daily obſervation for a proof of this. The fear of God, and a faith in Jeſus, go together. We *walk before him in holineſs and righteouſneſs*, under the *knowledge of ſalvation that he has given to his people, in the remiſſion of their ſins, through the tender mercy of our God.* How is the Deity treated by thoſe that deſpiſe Revelation? How groſsly deficient are they in their homage to him, who are more ready to blaſpheme his name, to neglect his ordinances, and lay aſide even that practice which all nature has confeſſed to be his due? On the other hand, how does a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jeſus affect thoſe that have it? In what manner do they think and ſpeak of God? Is it with the freedom and faucineſs that are charged upon their princi-

Luke i. 75. 77.

ples?

ples? Are they too familiar with him? No; it is plain they dare not do what they are accuſed of, but *tremble at his word.* And thus you ſee, that the reverence, without which there can be no agreeable worſhip, is promoted by the Myſteries of our Religion. SERM. 9.

3. It is in the belief of theſe doctrines that we feel the principles of *our* love to God, which are but the rebound of *his* to us. *We love him becauſe he firſt loved us.* This we ſee in the Myſtery of redemption. Had he pardoned us without any ſatisfaction, it would not only have wronged his Juſtice, but obſcured his Mercy. Had there been a remiſſion of ſins without ſhedding of blood, we muſt have admired his goodneſs at a lower rate than we do now. For *herein has God commended his love towards us, in that whilſt we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us. In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent forth his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.* The very price of our redemption, as well as the thing itſelf, is an argument of the Divine Goodneſs. That he ſhould furniſh out all the expence of his own ſatisfaction, that he himſelf ſhould *find out a Ranſom,* is a great deal more kind than if he had broke in upon his Juſtice, and given us our happineſs without any regard to *that* at all. We value the love that beſtows a ſalvation, not merely by what the thing *is,* but by what it *coſt, the precious blood of the Son of God, as a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.* 1 John iv. 19. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9, 10. Job xxxiii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 19.

Now, the more we ſee God's love, the more do we feel our own: And this muſt ever be the nobleſt principle of all duty. What we do with love looks like a heavenly action: When we are *conſtrained* with this, it makes obedience eaſy and delightful: It ruſhes through every impediment of nature 2 Cor. v. 14.

SERM. 9. nature and temptation; it ſets us above the world whilſt we are in it; and for this we could have no ſuch argument as we are now poſſeſſed of, were it not for the revelation that is given us in the Goſpel. Here we are led to deſign, to venture, to purPhil. iii. 8, 9, 10. ſue all for God, who has left ſo much for us. *I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord; for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt: knowing him, the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſuffering.* From his dying for us, we are willing to be crucified to the world; to all the offers that it makes, and all the diverſions that it gives. This has been a principle of duty to the martyrs; in the force of Heb. xi. 35. that, they *accepted not of deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection.* It was in view of what Chriſt had done and ſuffered, that they loved him ſo Rev. xii. 11. powerfully, *not loving their own lives unto the death.*

4. We find by experience that this makes the worCol. ii. 2. ſhip of God our delight and pleaſure. *Our hearts are knit together and comforted unto the riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the Myſtery of God, and of the Father, and* 2 Cor iii. 14. *of Chriſt.* The vail upon the Jews will be *done away in Chriſt;* and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* It is owing to this, that in all devotion, *we behold with open face, the glory of the Lord;* the greateſt manifeſtation that he is making of himſelf to a loſt world. Hence it is that others Acts iv. 13. have taken notice, that *we have been with Jeſus.* Pſ. cv. 3 We *glory in his holy name, for the heart of them will rejoice that ſeek the Lord.*

Mere bowing before Him that made us, and begging his favour, is the duller part of a believer's Heb. x. 19 work; a *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all, through the blood of Jeſus, is his principle and his* Pſ. xlv. 2. *glory.* He is introduced by one who is *fairer than* Phil. i. 21. *the ſons of men. To him to live is Chriſt.* His Saviour

viour is not only the way to the Father, but *altogether lovely, the choiceſt among ten thouſand.* He draws us that we may *run after him.* The King *brings us into his chambers,* where we are glad in him: *He is held in his galleries, He dwells in the gardens, and the companions hear his voice.* We have *taſted* this *Lord to be gracious, and come to him as a living ſtone,* to have more of that experience; He was *diſallowed* indeed *of men, but he is choſen of God and precious.* We ſhould loſe our reliſh of an ordinance, if the love and kindneſs of God our Saviour had not appeared. *We have thought of thy loving kindneſs, O God, in the midſt of thy temple; according to thy name, O God, ſo is thy praiſe to the ends of the earth.* We ſee by a daily obſervation, how the truth as it is in Jeſus has a mighty influence. It makes us joyful in the houſe of prayer. *His name is as ointment poured forth. His love we remember more than wine.* Had he not been manifeſted in the fleſh, and dwelt among us, we might have worſhipped God, but could never have had any of that pleaſure, that make *his yoke to be eaſy, and his burden light.*

SERM. 9.
Cant. v. 10.
—i. 4,
—vii. 5.
—viii. 13.
1 Pet. ii. 3, 4.
Pſ. xlviii. 9, 10.
Cant. i. 3, 4.
Mat. xi. 30.

5. In this Revelation we have the greateſt and beſt examples of our duty. By the manifeſtation of God in the fleſh, we have the higheſt of all; the obedience of Chriſt *magnified the law and made it honourable.* And beſides that, it is eaſy to ſhow, that without theſe doctrines we could not have had thoſe noble patterns that God has given us in ſeveral ages. It was with a regard to theſe that they of old have done their duty, ſerved their generation, and fallen aſleep in peace. *Of this ſalvation the Prophets enquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace that ſhould come unto us; ſearching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified before-hand the ſufferings of Chriſt and the glory that ſhould follow: Unto whom it was revealed,*

1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.

SERM. 9. *vealed, that not unto themſelves, but to us they did miniſter the things that are now reported by them that have preached the Goſpel among us.* It is by
Heb. xi. 2. this faith that *the elders obtained a good report.*
— xii. 1. We are thus *compaſſed about with a great cloud of witneſſes,* who are well ſpoken of: God has *teſtified of their gifts, they have obtained witneſs that they were righteous.* In the belief of theſe things, *the ſufferings of Chriſt and the glory* that ſhould follow, they have *wrought righteouſneſs, ſubdued kingdoms, quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, ſtopped the mouths of lions, out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

This has in latter ages given people a courage in the field that no terror could daunt, and a faithfulneſs in council that no bribes could pervert. But what is there of thoſe ſocial virtues in thoſe
Rom. i. 28, 29, 30, 31. who *denied the Lord that bought them? As they like not to retain God in their knowledge, he gives them over to a reprobate mind, being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whiſperers, back-biters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, inventers of evil things, diſobedient to parents, without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable,*
Phil. ii. 21. *unmerciful.* The Apoſtle complains, that *all men love their own, not the things of Jeſus Chriſt;* and by his way of judging you may conclude, that thoſe people who hate and deſpiſe the things of Jeſus Chriſt, do only love *their own.* They are for themſelves entirely. As they ſerve not the *Lord*
Rom. xvi. 18. *Jeſus, they ſerve their own belly.* The great men
Jer. v. 4. who *knew not the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God, have altogether broken the yoke, and burſt the bonds.* It is only among believers that we *find* thoſe who have lived with credit, and died with peace. As they did not make *ſhipwreck of faith,*

faith, they did not make *ſhipwreck of a good conſcience*. They have borne down the temptations of honours, places, and rewards; *chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than all the treaſures of Egypt; becauſe they had reſpect to the recompence of reward, and endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible.* SERM. 9. Heb. xi. 25, 26, 27.

6. By this they were inſpired with hope. They went out of the world with no reluctance at their being ſo indifferent to it. *They deſired a better country, that is an heavenly.* *They rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.* He diſtinguiſhed them at their death. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* They did not die ſtupid or frighted, as they muſt have done, if they had paid no regard to the Myſteries of Religion. That which raiſed them above the fears of death, was their *knowing in whom they believed*, that he tranſacted that whole affair of redemption, and was therefore *able to keep what they had committed to him againſt that day.* They looked forward to the day which is ſo often called *the day of Chriſt.* They had put ſomething into his hands, and had thoſe apprehenſions of his perfection as to think he was able to keep it, that nothing entruſted with him ſhall be loſt. —— 16. Rom. v. 2. Pſ. xxxvii. 37. 2 Tim. i. 12.

And is it not good following ſuch as thoſe through the croſs turns of life, and at laſt through the valley of the ſhadow of death? Is it not very deſirable to die as they did, who *feared no ill*, having God to be with them, *his rod and his ſtaff to comfort them?* They had no reluctance in ſaying, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.* They looked unto him *as the author and finiſher of faith.* They knew that upon the belief *that Jeſus died and roſe again, thoſe who ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him;* Pſ. xxiii. 4. Acts vii. 59. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Theſſ. iv. 14.

and

SERM. 9. and *that* made them look upon death as a paſſage by which they went to be *ever with the Lord.*

7. This has given good people a principle of charity to thoſe that differ from them, and the trueſt value for thoſe for whom they are agreed.

Eph. iv. 15, 16. *Speaking the truth in love they grow up unto him in all things who is the Head even Chriſt, from whom the whole body fitly joined together increaſes to the edifying of itſelf in love.* As a Myſtery is above the comprehenſion of human reaſon, we can only receive it upon a Divine teſtimony. *Fleſh and blood has not revealed it, but our Father who is in heaven.* This ſhould give us a pity for others, who as yet are in darkneſs and ſee no light. It will keep us from the *paths of the deſtroyer*, and every thing that looks like penal authority. He that thinks to drive in the Chriſtian Religion by human laws, knows nothing what belongs to it.

If I ſhould force a Mahometan, it would be ſcandalous to Chriſtianity, becauſe if ever he is convinced, it is owing to a light that we cannot give him.

2 Tim. ii. 25. We muſt in *meekneſs inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.* If *no man*

1 Cor. xii. 3. *can ſay, that Jeſus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt,* throwing a man into jails, and turning him out of places for not *ſaying ſo*, is a reflection upon the Holy Ghoſt for not doing his office. As for men who ſubſcribe articles that they never think of, and mean no more by Orthodoxy than a title to preferment, it will be eaſy enough to them; though they are *deſtitute of the truth*, they ſuppoſe that *gain is godlineſs:* And perhaps theſe will find no ſcruple to come into hard meaſures againſt thoſe who differ from them. But he that does juſtice to the Myſtery of any doctrine will be of opinion, that as men cannot give faith, ſo men ſhould not

1 Joh. iii. 18, 19. pretend to reward it. This teaches us to *love, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby*

hereby we ſhall know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him. SERM. 9.

If you pleaſe in our day to examine the different tempers with which revealed Religion is maintained and oppoſed, you will find whether of them is the wiſdom that deſcends from above. There is among ſome people, a ſcorn of all thoſe who give up their reaſons to a Divine inſtruction. They are treated as fools and blind, who take things upon truſt, and are denied the title that every honeſt man ought to have of being a *free thinker*. The belief of what God has told us, is ſpoke of with contempt; as if faith in him was the deſtruction of reaſon in ourſelves: So it was of old. That which is called the Arian perſecution, was one of the greateſt the Church of God ever felt: And I muſt freely declare my opinion, that all the late arguments for liberty are inconſiſtent with the language of reproach and inſolence that come out of the ſame mouths. If people are not to be perſecuted for ſaying there are *no Myſteries in* Religion, they ought not to be laughed at, and treated with ſcorn for ſaying *there are*. For *cruel mockings* are as really perſecution as any thing in the world can be. The Apoſtle calls it ſo, *He that is born after the fleſh, perſecutes him that is born after the Spirit.* The caſe that he refers to is that of *Iſhmael*, who was guilty of no more to *Iſaac* than mocking him. I am ſorry there is ſo much reaſon to fear, that if ſome had the power they deſire, they who have exclaimed ſo loudly againſt making *Newgate* the place of Heretics, would think *Bedlam* a proper houſe for Believers: The Apoſtle could not give the Jews a worſe name than that of *deſpiſers*. But the Myſteries of our Religion are according to *Godlineſs*. When they are received in truth, they make a perſon humble in his own eyes, and that, I am ſure, is the beſt ground of peace, for *only by pride comes contention.*

Gal. iv. 29.

Acts xiii. 41.

SERM. 9. I will cloſe what you have heard with a ſhort APPLICATION.

1. If theſe are Myſteries of *Godlineſs*, then you ſee the true ſpring of the oppoſition that is made to them, not becauſe they are above reaſon, but becauſe they are againſt corruption, and *hide pride from man.* One that walks humbly with his God cannot treat them with ſcorn. But becauſe the practical part of the Bible bears hard upon fleſh and blood, that it may no longer be a *Rule*, ſinJoh. iii. 19, 20. ners will not ſuffer it to be a *Revelation. Men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil; for every one that doth evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.* This is bringing religion lower than the Heathen did. They that *had not the law, i. e.* a writRom. ii. 15. ten one, *were a law to themſelves, they had the work of the law written in their hearts.* Theſe owned a God; they profeſſed that he ought to be worſhipped; they had their times of doing it, and ſuch as they always accounted ſacred. Swearing and living without devotion, were things condemned even by their light; divers luſts and pleaſures, 1 Cor. v. 1. ſome ſort of impurities, were *not ſo much as named among the Gentiles.* Now, what is the reaſon that the Bible is ſo much in contempt, but becauſe it Rom. vii. 12. has refined our practice, in giving us a *commandment that is holy, juſt, and good?* And that it may 2 Theſſ. ii. 12. not have its weight they deny its Myſteries. *They believe not the truth who have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.*

2. Let us improve the Doctrines of Religion to this purpoſe, to make us better as well as wiſer. Aſk yourſelves upon the hearing of theſe Myſteries, what will God have me to *do?* This is callTit. ii. 10. ed *adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* By that means you will live down the reproach of men, and they who believe not the word may without it be *won by your converſation.* Let

it

it be seen, that these are Mysteries of *Godliness*; that your Religion does consist in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: He that in these things serves Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of men.* And, besides, by this means you will come to have a better light. *He that does his will, shall know the doctrine whether it be of God.* I should ever have a great value for that notion that leads a person to prayer, and keeps him always humble. What these doctrines are, I am in the next place to show you, as you find them distributed into six particulars: GOD *was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory.*

SERM. 9.
Rom. xiv. 17, 18.
Joh. vii. 17.

SERMON X.

August 17. 1718.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

God was manifest in the Flesh.

OUR Apostle having said of the Christian religion, that it is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*; that it is a *Mystery* containing the deep things of God; and that it is a Mystery of *Godliness*, to form the practice, and fill the mind; in the latter part of the verse he shews us, that this Revelation is equal to the pompous account he has given us of it: *It is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.* The particulars of this doctrine do every one of them answer the general characters that he had given of them all. We may take the account that he lays down, under this division.

Ch. i. 11.

First,

SERM. 10.

Firſt, The Perſon he ſpeaks of is called GOD. This is the ſubject of the Revelation. The Chriſtian religion is a report of Him, who was *declared to be the Son of God with power.* Rom. i. 4.

Secondly, We have the ſeveral diſcoveries that he made of himſelf, which are no fewer than ſix; he was *manifeſt in the Fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory.* Of theſe particulars you may obſerve two things.

1ſt, That they give us the ſeveral gradations of his power and love. One comes after another. They are ſo many ſtages of his appearance, comprehended in a hiſtory, that begins with his Incarnation, and ends with his Aſcending up on high. This is what he *delivered to the Corinthians* ἐν πρώτοις among the firſt and chief things, *that Chriſt died for our ſins, and that he was buried, and roſe again the third day, according to the Scriptures.* 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

2dly, That they all relate to the happineſs of mankind, and the redemption that he came about; it was for his people that he put on fleſh, and put on glory, that he appeared on earth, that he returned to heaven, and went through all the intermediate parts of the hiſtory that are mentioned in my text. *For their ſakes he ſanctified himſelf, that they might be ſanctified through the truth.* Theſe are things that relate to us, the matter of our faith; the Myſtery that God has given for our entertainment and practice. That the holineſs of his people may be carried on, he reveals what Chriſt has done from the extreme of humiliation to that of reward. This doctrine leads his people into a life of dependence and duty. Joh. xvii. 19.

But before I enter upon this account of the words, we may conſider the objection that is raiſed againſt the doctrine contained in them. Inſtead of Θεὸς, which ſignifies *God*, there are two copies that have Ὃ, which ſignifies *That* or *Which*; and

and ſo they refer it to the Myſtery he had ſpoke of before, that *This* was manifeſt in the fleſh, *&c.* But, beſides the teſtimony of all other manuſcripts againſt theſe two, we need do no more than take the affirmation quite through the ſeveral particulars, and examine how properly theſe fix things may be ſaid of the Goſpel. SERM. 10.

It is with a great weight upon the phraſe to ſay, that the Goſpel is *juſtified in the Spirit.* The Spirit's revealing, explaining, and impreſſing it, we underſtand, and if that is all they mean by the juſtification of the Goſpel, it is a very odd way of conveying the notion. Then again, it is ſaid to be *ſeen of Angels*; as they are miniſters of providence, and help on the deſign of grace, it is made known to them; but whether this may be called their *ſeeing* it, I will leave any one to judge. It may indeed be referred to their contemplation of it *in heaven*, but how that comes to be a part of the Myſtery of Godlineſs *to us*, I cannot imagine. That the Goſpel is *preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world*, is true enough, but I cannot apprehend how it is *manifeſt in the Fleſh.* That it is *manifeſt* we grant, becauſe it is preached and believed; but what theſe words *in the Fleſh* have to do with it, is not ſo eaſy to be conceived. And the laſt part of the character is more difficult than all the reſt, how the Goſpel ſhould be *received up into Glory.* This is at leaſt an unuſual way of talking: There is more myſtery in the language than there is in the thing; and ſurely they who are againſt a myſterious doctrine, ought not to confound us with myſterious words. Beſides the harſhneſs of the interpretation, I would obſerve to you theſe two things.

1. That the whole paragraph is delivered in the form of a report, or a hiſtory. He tells us of that which is *already done.* This can hardly be ſaid of the Goſpel itſelf; for we muſt not ſpeak of its being

SERM. 10. being *manifeſt*, as a thing that is *over*, ἐφανερώθη, becauſe it ſtill continues to be the light of the world. And if it may be ſaid in any ſenſe to be *received* up into glory, that is all *future*, and muſt refer to the vindication that God will give it at laſt, when *the judgment is ſet, and the books are opened;* when perſons ſhall have their ſecret thoughts diſcloſed, and their final ſentence determined by what is written there. This may indeed be called receiving it into glory; but that is all *to come.*

Now, if you apply theſe things to our Saviour, it may be truly ſaid of him, that HE *was manifeſt in the Fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit*, &c. There are proper periods for each of theſe. There was a *fulneſs of time* for the firſt, and particular appointments for every one of the reſt. He yet indeed continues to be *preached* unto the Gentiles, and *believed* on in the world; but there was a *ſet time* to favour theſe deſolate parts of the earth; and of that he ſpeaks with joy: When the Greeks came to Phi-
Joh. xii. 22, 23. lip, deſiring to ſee Jeſus, *Now*, ſaith he, *is the hour come that the Son of man ſhall be glorified.*

And then, his being received up into heaven, is an hiſtorical truth; there was a day which he devoted to that ſolemnity. As he was *juſtified of the Spirit* at his reſurrection, being *declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holineſs;* ſo
Acts i. 9. 22. after he had ſpoke to the diſciples, *a cloud received him out of their ſight.* We read of *this* as the cloſe of a diſpenſation, that *begun with* John's baptiſm, continued through the whole courſe of what *Jeſus did and taught*, and laſted *till the day in which he was taken up from them.* All the expreſſions in the text fall eaſy to this interpretation. If we will underſtand them of Chriſt, there is no need to force the phraſes out of their natural ſenſe, but take them in this book, as we ſhould take them in any other.
Acts xxvi. 26. *The King knows of theſe things*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *before whom I ſpeak freely.* This is what we muſt *confeſs*

confeſs with our mouths, that Jeſus died, and believe in our hearts, that God raiſed him from the dead. SERM. 10 Rom. x. 9.

2. He ſpeaks of this as the great Myſtery of Godlineſs; the moſt important *Wonder* that ever God revealed; a thing that ſtrikes all the powers of adoration. It is *not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world*, whom God has brought to nought; but *his own wiſdom in a Myſtery;* that which is *hidden*, that which he had *ordained before the world to our glory, which not one of the princes of this world knew; but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.* Theſe are βάθη Θεῦ, the depths of Divinity. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Now, if you underſtand this account of the *Goſpel*, that cannot be the greateſt myſtery. I own *it is* a myſtery to have ſuch a Revelation as this in the world, as the means of raiſing and feeding a ſpiritual life; but methinks the reſurrection of the body, and the happineſs of the ſoul, are greater wonders; that *this mortal ſhould put on immortality*, that people ſo defiled ſhould be fitted for heaven, are things that ſound more amazing, than to have the Goſpel made known among the nations.

The Apoſtle would not have drawn on our regard after this manner, Without controverſy great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, if there was room to imagine any thing *greater* than what he was going to ſpeak of. It is true, no myſtery can be little; but by his manner of introducing *this*, we ſhould ſuppoſe there were degrees among them, and that now he was about to deliver that which is the *greateſt* of all. Now, where lies the extraordinary wonder, that the *Goſpel* ſhould be *manifeſt in the fleſh*, *i. e.* as they explain it, that it ſhould be preached by men of like paſſions with ourſelves? There are many things that we are more amazed at than this. Where is the peculiar degree of myſtery, that it ſhould be *juſtified by the Spirit*, that the Spirit who reveals

SERM. 10. reveals it by his wiſdom, ſhould attend it with his influence? And ſo you may ſay of the reſt.

But now, it is all wonder; it is as high as our thoughts can riſe; nay, by the confeſſion of thoſe who oppoſe this doctrine, it is more than men can believe; it is *too much* a Myſtery, that GOD *ſhould be manifeſt in the Fleſh;* that he who ſeemed to be neglected and forſaken of the Father, ſhould be *juſtified of the Spirit:* That he who was made lower than the Angels, was *ſeen* of them, and owned by them: That he who was made of the ſeed of Abraham, *a miniſter of the circumciſion,* ſhould be *preached unto the Gentiles,* to whom he was never ſent in perſon: That he who found ſo little faith in the earth, is *believed on in the world;* and after he was abandoned both by God and man, ſhould be *received up into glory:* Theſe are wonders of another ſort. If there is any comparing of myſteries, we muſt all of us own, that it is a great deal more for God to give us *himſelf* as a companion, than to give us his *book* for a rule.

The Apoſtle does not only ſpeak of a Myſtery, but a *great* one, and one that is ſo *without controverſy;* none in the world ſhall be able to deny it the title, and no one ever did; ſo far from it, that the people who do not believe it, give a teſtimony to the greatneſs of the Myſtery: There is *no controverſy* about that; no, they are ſo ſatisfied upon this head, as to make it their argument againſt the doctrine, becauſe it is over-myſterious. There are many wonders which they receive, though they cannot explain; but this exceeds them all.

I ſhall therefore give you the words of the text, as they ſtand in our tranſlation, for the firſt branch of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, or rather the root and ground of all the reſt; and you may take them as a doctrine.

GOD was manifeſt in the Fleſh.

I am directed by the parts of the text, and its connection to what went before, to proceed in the following method. SERM. 10.

1. The Person that he speaks of is *God.*

2. Here is the *manifestation* that he has given of himself.

3. This was *in the flesh,* by taking upon him our nature.

4. This is to be considered both as a *Mystery,* and as a Mystery *of Godliness,* the foundation of practical religion.

I. We may put the question, as the Prophet did, *Who is he that comes from Edom, with his dyed garments from Bozrah,* WHO was thus *manifest in the flesh? He that speaks in righteousness, mighty to save.* We have the plain language of the text, that it was *the great God.* I must own that the title of *God* does not in every place of Scripture signify the supreme Deity. Isa. lxiii. 1.

First, It is very certain, that there is such a thing as a person's being called God, by virtue of his *office*; and the appellation does not express so much as a moral dignity, or tell us that they who have it are ever the better for it. That sentence in the 82d Psalm, *I have said ye are gods,* seems to be said in reproach. For as they *judged unjustly, and accepted the persons of the wicked, as they would not understand, but walked on in darkness,* calling them gods was no security; for they should *die like men, and fall like one of the princes.* As this name cannot *dignify* a tyrant, it ought not to *protect* him; for it is given to the vilest being in the creation. The devil himself is called *the god of this world:* And *he* may as well from that title plead for an universal empire, as any other person argue an absolute command. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Secondly, It is also to be confessed, that the name of God is sometimes given in the execution of a particular warrant: And then it is limited to that

SERM. 10. very *commiſſion* by which thoſe people are empower-
Exod. vii. 1. ed to act. Thus the Lord tells Moſes, *I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother ſhall be thy Prophet.*

Thirdly, It ſeems to be given to the Angels for
Heb. i. 6. the dignity of their nature: *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him*, is ſuppoſed to be a quotation of
Pſal. xcvii. 7. thoſe words, *Worſhip him all ye gods.* Now the queſtion is, whether the word in my text is capable of any higher ſenſe than theſe three. For, notwithſtanding what I have ſaid, it is certain,

1. That there is but *one God*; and therefore the commuication of the title ought to be regarded with the greateſt modeſty. No perfections of the Divine Nature go along with it. This is the lan-
Deut. vi. 4. guage of all true religion, *The Lord our God is one*
1 Tim. vi. 16. *Lord.* He alone is the poſſeſſor of *immortality*, μόνος ἔχων. *We know that there is no idol in the world,*
1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. οὐδὲν εἴδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ, *and that there is no other God beſides one*, οὐδεὶς Θεὸς ἕτερος εἰ μὴ εἷς. For though *there are thoſe who are called gods, either in heaven or in earth, as there are gods many, and lords many; yet unto us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things*, ἐξ οὗ as the fountain out of which they are taken, *and we unto him* εἰς αὐτόν; *and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.* The Heathen run into a whimſical devotion, by fancying a multitude of deities; but the wiſer ſort among them acknowledged one ſupreme power, and whenever any of them came out of their er-
1 Theſ. i. 9. roneous opinion, it is what they loaded with the utmoſt abhorrence. *They turned from idols to ſerve*
Jer. xvi. 19, 20. *the living and true God.* As it was foretold, the *Gentiles ſhould come from the ends of the earth, and ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited vanity, lies, and things wherein there is no profit: Will a man make gods to himſelf which are no gods?* Nothing in Revelation ever broke in upon the unity of the Godhead. The ſuppoſition of two natures, equal-

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ly ſupreme, almighty, and eternal, can have no place in reaſon, and no pretence from Scripture. *It is life eternal to know the only true God.* SERM. 10. John xvii. 3.

2. Though God has ſuffered creatures to wear his *titles*, yet he has always expreſſed a jealouſy at their ſharing his *honour*. Both the angelic and human nature have ſunk under his hand, when they made any pretenſions this way. *Lucifer the ſon of the morning ſaid, I will be like the moſt High; I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God:* And thus being *lifted up with pride*, he fell into that which is called *the condemnation of the devil;* and ſo it fared with our firſt parents: They had a mind to be as *gods*, and upon that *he drove out the man.* So it has been with particular tyrants. Nebuchadnezzar, by raiſing himſelf to be a god, was thrown down into a beaſt, to live and feed as they do, in their manner, and perhaps in their company. The king of Tyrus had his *heart lifted up, and ſaid, I am a god, I ſit in the ſeat of God; and he had ſet his heart as the heart of God.* And upon this crime you have terrible animadverſions of providence: *Wilt thou ſay yet before him that ſlays thee, I am a god? but thou ſhalt be a man, and no god, in the hand of him that ſlays thee.* Thus the man of ſin, the ſon of perdition, *oppoſes and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he, as God, ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God. This wicked one will the Lord conſume with the Spirit of his mouth, and deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming.* Iſa. xiv. 12. —— 14. 1 Tim. iii. 6. Gen. iii. 24. Dan. iv. 22. Ezek. xxviii. 2. ver. 9. 2 Theſ. ii. 4. 8.

So that you ſee, though God has been pleaſed to allow the title, yet it is with ſuch limitations, that it muſt never ſignify in any other than himſelf, a ſupremacy of power, or a claim to worſhip. The Angels, though they have their name with an eminence that the greateſt of men cannot pretend to, yet are not raiſed by it above the temper and the poſture of devotion: Though they *excel in ſtrength*, they

SERM. 10. they obey his commandments, fulfil his pleaſure,
Pſal. ciii. 20. and *hearken to the voice of his word.* Nor dare any of them take the homage with the title. One of them would not let John *fall down before him,* but
Rev. xxii. 9. ſays in a peremptory manner, *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the Prophets: Worſhip thou God.*

From hence you may conclude, that whoever is called by the name of God, and *upon that* makes a demand of religious worſhip, muſt be either a Crea-
2 Theſ. ii. 4. tor or an Uſurper. Thus Antichriſt *as God, ſits in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.* And would Chriſt do any thing to give a ſuſpicion
John v. 18. —x. 33. of *making himſelf equal with God?* Would he *being a man, make himſelf God,* if he had not the ſame eternal nature? When he roſe again from the dead,
Heb. i. 6. 8. it was ſaid *of* him, *Worſhip him all ye gods;* and *to* him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* This proves that he is greater than thoſe who are called gods, either from their office, or the dignity of a derived nature.

Though worſhip is oftentimes no more than a civility, yet it is impoſſible that the word ſhould carry ſo low a ſenſe in this place. God has ordered his Angels to attend his ſervants, to bear them up in their hands, but can that be called by the name of *worſhip!* Why ſhould we then ſuppoſe, when God ſaith with all this ſolemnity, *Let the Angels worſhip him,* he means any leſs by it than every reader would think that David did in the Pſalm from which it is taken? where he tells us of
Pſal. xcvii. 2, 3, 4, 5. a *Jehovah* that *reigns; that clouds and darkneſs are about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne: That the hills melted like wax at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the Lord of the whole earth; that the heavens declare his righteouſneſs, and all the people ſee his glory.* What! is he ſpeaking all this of a titular god, one that has the name, but not the nature? No ſurely: On purpoſe

poſe to diſtinguiſh the God whom he means from the creatures that are only called ſo, he turns with indignation upon others, *Confounded be all they that ſerve graven images*, and then adds, *Worſhip him all ye gods.* Would any mortal be at a loſe about the explication of theſe words, as they ſtand in the Old Teſtament? And are they debaſed and ſunk into a lower ſenſe, when they are brought into the New? Do not they contain as much in the Apoſtle, as they did in the Pſalmiſt? SERM. 19. Pſ. xcvii. 7.

Nay, you may carry the conſideration much farther. In the pſalm they are ſuppoſed to be ſpoke by David. Though he received them under the direction of the Holy Spirit, yet he delivers them in his own name; it is a call of the ſame kind with that, Pſal. ciii. 21. *Bleſs the Lord, ye his Angels*, and, Pſal. cxlviii. 1, 2. *Praiſe the Lord in the heavens, praiſe him in the heights, praiſe him all his Angels, praiſe him all his hoſts.* Thus he wiſhes here, *Worſhip him all ye gods.* But in the epiſtle to the Hebrews, the ſentence is placed with more dignity, as it comes out of the mouth of God himſelf, *When he brings the firſt begotten again into the world*, HE *ſaith, Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* HE ſaith it, who has ſo often ſaid that *he is a jealous God, and will not give his worſhip to another.* Would not any one conclude that our worſhip may ſafely follow that of the Angels? But

I will keep within the argument of the text; the Perſon who manifeſted himſelf in the fleſh, is here called GOD. I have allowed that the mere title does not always ſignify what we mean by Divinity; but the queſtion is, whether it is *here* capable of ſo low a notion. I deſire you will ſtill keep in mind what I have already told you, that God never gave the title with a deſign of conveying religious *worſhip* to thoſe that have it. And therefore, if we find either the Father has given, or Chriſt himſelf has taken the name of God, on purpoſe

SERM. 10. purpoſe to engage our faith, to poſſeſs our reverence, and lead us into the loweſt adorations, we muſt conclude that He is *God* who was manifeſt in the Fleſh.

You are very ſenſible that this doctrine is avowed upon ſeveral other Scriptures, and therefore to enter with a full deſign into the controverſy, is to conſider them all, which I ſhall not do from this text. My buſineſs is to lay before you what I take to be contained in theſe words, and ſhall never bring in any other paſſages than as they give an illuſtration to this. To that purpoſe I would obſerve,

1. That the queſtion is not whether Chriſt was *man*, and had an inferior nature to the Father; that is confeſſed by all, and therefore,

2. It is to no manner of purpoſe to obſerve how many more texts there are to prove him a *Mediator*, than to prove him a God, becauſe that is properly the main account we are to have of him.

3. His *hiding* the Deity, ſuffering it not to be known, and publicly owned, is no argument againſt it, becauſe it was part of his obedience to become of *no reputation*, and to make way for the *death of the croſs*.

4. If there are but a *few* places, nay, if there is but *one* in the Bible where his Divinity is revealed, it is the ſame thing as if there were a thouſand. The ſecond text does not add to the truth of the firſt, it can only confirm it.

5. There are ſeveral paſſages which muſt either be ſo underſtood, or we ſhall find it neceſſary to lay aſide the uſual *meaning* of words, and bring a new ſenſe to them.

6. This has been the belief of *good people*, and an opinion that the Spirit of God has witneſſed to: It has raiſed them above their fears, and proved their greateſt ſupport in a dying hour.

7. If they were wrong in this, they muſt have been guilty of the worſt of crimes, and have gone out

out of the world in an act of *idolatry*. And how SERM. 10.
ſhall we account for the ſatisfaction they had in dying? If that was all a deluſion, will it not be very hard to prove there is any reality in Godlineſs?

8. If he is not God, we are in no better a condition, nay upon ſome accounts in much worſe than thoſe under the law; for *then* God revealed himſelf to them with a greater majeſty. He governed them *by himſelf*, which was more than ſpeaking to them *by his Son*, upon ſuppoſition that he was an inferior.

9. None but a God could have anſwered the end of being *manifeſt* in the fleſh, as a Prophet to teach effectually, as a Prieſt to make reconciliation, and as a King of Saints, to be Head over all things unto the Church.

10. The character of Deity is what the Scripture has laid upon all the *other* branches of this Myſtery; his being juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory.

1. It is no part of the queſtion, Whether Chriſt was man, and might not ſay with all propriety, *My Father is greater than I. That the Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſees the Father do: That there is a day and hour which the Son knows not of;* and that *the Son himſelf ſhall be ſubject to him that has put all things under him, that God may be all in all:* This matter is univerſally confeſſed, that he was *the man Chriſt Jeſus;* though he uſes a word to expreſs it that cannot ſignify ſo much in him as it does in us, when he calls himſelf *the Son of man:* When we are called ſo, the meaning can be no other, than that we are produced by two human parents, which is more than can be ſaid of him, and therefore in his genealogy the hiſtorian is very cautious. He tells us, Jeſus was about thirty years of age, *being, as was ſuppoſed, the ſon of*

Joh. v. 19. Mark xiii. 32. 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Luke iii. 23.

SERM. 19. *of Joſeph:* But that ſuppoſition was ill grounded, becauſe this was *the ſign that God himſelf* would give his people, the only inſtance that we have of
Iſa. vii. 14. it in all ages of the world, *that a virgin ſhould conceive and bear a ſon.* The manner of bringing this about is told by the Angel in language that is
Luk. i. 35. never to be changed: *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee, and therefore the holy thing that ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God.* So that the very producing of his human nature was a Divine act. And yet

There is no controverſy upon this head, that he was truly the man Chriſt Jeſus. It is allowed,
Heb. ii. 14. 17. *That foraſmuch as the children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he likewiſe himſelf took part of the ſame. It behoved him in all things to be made like*
— iv. 15. *unto his brethren. We have not an High Prieſt who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without ſin.* So that though that *body* was what *God pro-*
Gal. iv. 4. *vided for him*, yet he was really *made of a woman.*
Rom. viii. 3. He had *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh;* he took upon him thoſe infirmities, and ſubmitted to thoſe vexations in our nature, as if he had been a ſinner. Sin was to be *condemned in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the law may be fulfilled in thoſe that walk after the Spirit.* Therefore theſe two principles are the main articles of our religion, that there is *but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus.* He is, what the primi-
Gen. iii. 15. tive promiſe foretold he ſhould be, *The ſeed of the*
Joh. i. 14. *woman. The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt a-*
1 Joh. i. 1. *mong us. We have ſeen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of that word of life.*

2. It anſwers no manner of purpoſe to obſerve how many *more* texts there are to prove him a man, than there are to tell us he is God. There is

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a plain reason for this, because our concern with him is in his mediatorial title. *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Remember Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.* He is the *days-man between God* and us. We read of Christ, that *by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things are created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* But how many of these invisibles he has made, the height of these thrones, the nature of these dominions, the number of these principalities and powers, what worlds he has formed, how he rules them, (for they are created *for him*, as well as *by him*), the Scripture tells us nothing of, because the design of the Gospel is not to give us the glory that he has from his several creatures, but that which comes from the *redemption* that he has undertaken. It is more our concern to know that he is *Head over all things unto the Church*, than that principalities and powers are subject to him; that he redeems *us*, than that he rules *them*.

SERM. 10.
1 Joh. i. 3.
2 Tim. ii. 8.
Job ix. 33.
Col. i. 16, 17.

So that I suppose you will not be much moved by an argument that is often used, that Christ is seldom called God, but there is scarce a page in the New Testament wherein he is not represented as less than God: No manner of doubt of it; because the design of the book is to consider him as *manifest in the Flesh*, as taking away sin *by the sacrifice of himself*. And therefore if he was called a man ten thousand times, it proves but these two things, first, That *he really was so*, which none denies; and, secondly, That our regard to him must be *as he is so*. *This is life eternal, to know Jesus Christ, whom God has sent.* The Apostle speaks of the *excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.* This is not a knowledge of what he does

John xvii. 3.
Phil. iii. 8.

SERM. 10. among the Angels, how he ordered the ſea and land, giving the former its decree, and the latter
Prov. viii. 27. its ſettlement, his *ſetting a compaſs upon the face of the heavens.* We are not ſo much intereſted in
ver. 31. theſe things, as in his *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and having his delight among the ſons*
Phil. iii. 10. *of men.* That I may know him, ſaith he, *the power of his reſurrection, the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, and be made conformable to his death.*

3. His *hiding* the Deity, and not letting himſelf be known and confeſſed abroad, is no argument that he is not God. Becauſe this was the neceſſary humiliation of one nature, and prepared for the ſufferings of another. The Divine Nature could not die, and therefore all the humbling of this was
Phil. ii. 7, 8. to *make himſelf of no reputation;* to lay aſide the form of God in which he was, and take upon him *the form of a ſervant.* The remark that ſome give us upon this text, that the *form* of God does not prove that he was God, but only like him, ſweeps away the reſt of the verſe at once: They may as well ſay, *the faſhion of a man* and *the form of a ſervant,* do not ſignify the reality of the nature he took, or the ſufferings that he felt, but only a reſemblance of them both. The criticiſm, inſtead of garbling the text, quite deſtroys it, and makes his Human Nature a phantom, as well as the Divine no more than a reſemblance. He charged the devils that they ſhould not make him known to *be the Holy One of God.* It was needful that he ſhould be *deſpiſed and rejected of men, a ſervant of rulers:* This he could not have been, had he ſuffered his
1 Cor. ii. 8. brightneſs to appear. But that is what *none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* When he had been owned by the Father in the mount of transfiguration, he ordered his diſciples
Mat xvii. 9. to let none know it, *till the Son of man was riſen again;* and gave this as the reaſon for it, that he

was

was to be delivered into the hands of ſinful men. When the young man came and kneeled to him, he refuſed the honours that were his due, *Why calleſt thou me good?* And this was one branch of his humiliation. SERM. 10.

SERMON XI.

Aug. 31. 1718.

4. IF there are but a *few* places of Scripture where he is called God, nay, if there is but *one* that reveals to us the truth of his Divine nature, it is the ſame thing as if there were a thouſand. This is what I need not much inſiſt on, becauſe it carries its own evidence. One text may receive light from another, but it has a fulneſs of truth within itſelf. It is not here as it ought to be in ſome affairs among men, that one witneſs ſhall not be ſufficient; at the mouth of two or three witneſſes muſt the thing be determined: This is needful when we have to do with creatures that are falſe and fallible; that will deceive, and may be deceived; liable to take a deluſion, and ready to give one. But it is otherwiſe when God is the ſpeaker: *He is not a man that he ſhould lie. A God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.* His words do not want any thing to give them an importance, but are *as ſilver tried in a furnace of earth, purified ſeven times.* So that if he has but ſaid it *once*, there is as great a foundation as our faith can deſire. It is as true that *Shalman ſpoiled Betharbel in the day of battle*, which is never mentioned but Hoſ. x. 14. as it is that *Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat made Iſrael to ſin*, which is dropped into

Numb. xxiii. 19. Deut. xxxii. 4. Pſal. xii. 6.

SERM. II. into the ſtory of almoſt every King that ſucceeded him.

I lay down this principle to take off the terror of an objection that has in it a great deal more noiſe than ſubſtance; that there is no compari on between the number of texts that declare the *human nature* of Chriſt, and thoſe that give him the title and the attributes of a God. This ſignifies nothing at all to the argument: It only ſhews, that we are to believe he was man, *made of a woman*, and that he is chiefly revealed to us in the ſtate of a Mediator, as placing himſelf between God and ſinners, making up the quarrel, and filling up the diſtance. As that is our principal concern with him, ſo he is frequently revealed in a character that ſuits with the faith we have in him, and the expectation we have from him. *Him has God ſet forth, a propitiation through faith in his blood.*

Rom. iii. 25.

His abſolute Deity is what we have the leſs concern with. It is not ſo much to our purpoſe to know what other worlds he has created; in what manner *all things are upheld by the word of his power;* as that *he has by himſelf purged away our ſins*, and in our nature is *made better than the Angels.* This is the report of the Goſpel, *the record that God has given us of his Son.* If he has made thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers, (as we are told he has), yet it is not the work of the Bible to give the records of his government over theſe. For as he is before all things, ſo by him all things conſiſt; ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα συνέστηκε, in him they are held together; he has bound the creation, given a beauty to the parts, and a harmony to the whole. But our buſineſs is to know what he has done, and will do for the redemption of human nature; ſo that it is no wonder that the book of God is taken up with the ſtory of his life and tranſactions *in the habitable parts of the earth*, and the courſe of *his delights among the ſons of men.*

Heb. i. 3, 4.

1 John v. 10.

men. The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us; full of Grace and Truth: And of his fulneſs have we received, and grace for grace; for the Law was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. SERM. II. John i. 14. 16, 17.

Theſe accounts determine nothing of his antecedent ſtate: His dwelling among us, and being made fleſh, is not to be underſtood in any contradiction to his being *with God, and his being God,* and *that the world was made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. The Son of man aſcended up where he was before.* The evidence or importance of a truth, does not depend on the number of texts that are brought for it. If there is but a ſingle revelation, if only *one in a certain place* has ſaid it, it is enough, becauſe it comes from a God *that cannot lie;* but we may ſay upon this head, as the Pſalmiſt has done upon another, *God has ſpoken once, yea twice have I heard it.* For, ver. 3. 4. Ch. vi. 62.

5. There are ſeveral Scriptures that cannot be underſtood of any other than God manifeſt in the Fleſh, unleſs we will lay aſide the uſual meaning of words, and give them a ſenſe in the Bible which they can bear no where elſe. *Except you utter by the tongue words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? for you ſpeak into the air.* It is ſcarce to be conceived, that he who has given us this book for a rule of faith and practice, would ſuffer ſo many places in it to carry an uncertain ſenſe, and lay us under any temptation of miſtaking, in a matter that ſo nearly concerns his own Glory. I have before told you that I ſhall not enter into the full controverſy, becauſe I would not bring in all the texts that refer to it under this one; and therefore I ſhall only mention a few that declare the Perſon of our Redeemer to be the True God. 1 Cor. xiv. 9.

One

SERM. II. One is, Iſa. ix. 6. *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders; and his name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſeller, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace.* Where we read of his incarnation, in the firſt and loweſt part of life; to us a child is born, to us a ſon is given; that can be underſtood of no other than him, who was *made of a woman, and made under the law.* The government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders: We ſhould think that this is too much for a creature; but leſt it ſhould be taken for no more than a delegation of authority committed to him, we are told at large who he is: This is the name whereby he ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſeller, *the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father,* the Prince of Peace. *Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end; he ſhall ſit upon the throne of David.* Here are things thrown together that plainly relate to different natures. He is ſaid to ſit upon the throne of David, which ſignifies a ſpiritual empire over his people in this world; and yet, that of his government there ſhall be no end; whereas we know, that the places where he has it, ſhall be deſtroyed. So that the immortality of his kingdom, and the peace that ariſes from it, muſt be underſtood of ſomething to which the throne of David never reached. Again, it is ſaid that he is born a *Son*, and yet that his name ſhall be called the Everlaſting *Father;* that he is given to us as a *Child*, and yet that he is the Mighty *God*.

One would think that the *manner* of ſpeaking this ſhould be no part of the objection, that he is not ſaid to *be* ſo, but only that it is the name whereby he ſhall be *called*. For though the title of *god* is given to perſons who fill the office, yet this is too much to be ſaid, that ſuch a one is the *Mighty God;* and it tranſcends all imagination, that any creature ſhould be called *the Everlaſting Father.*

Father. What a great deal of learning muſt be forced into the ſervice, to diſrobe theſe words of the majeſty they appear with? We will ſuppoſe, that they ſignify no more than a god by office; that they are only Names of Divinity, and do not expreſs the true Nature: But would the generality of people take them ſo? We may ſay upon this argument, *What is written in the law, how readeſt thou?* SERM. 11.

Is it not pity that ſo many thouſands of humble, ſerious perſons, ſhould be under a neceſſity of thinking wrong upon the ſubject, only for want of that critical learning, that reaches ſuch a very little way? Muſt a man be either a *Critic* or an *Idolater?* Can we think that God, who was ſo gracious as to give us this Book, has made it like a broken trumpet, to give an uncertain ſound? Is this the way for thoſe that *err in ſpirit to come to underſtanding, and thoſe that murmured to learn doctrine?* Can we ſay, upon this ſuppoſition, that he cauſes *light to ſhine out of darkneſs*, and gives us in our hearts *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt?* That he ſhould tell us of a *Child*, and call him the Everlaſting *Father*, which is the higheſt name that he takes to himſelf! That he ſhould charge us to call a perſon, like ourſelves, by the title of the *Mighty God*, which is the greateſt word that we can uſe, and belongs to none but an infinite Nature! I ſay, why ſhould he thus enſnare our ſouls with metaphors? There is not one reader in a thouſand but would think that the perſon here ſpoke of was *God.* Iſa. xxix. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Suppoſe the former part of the verſe was left out, or the whole varied thus, This is *my name* whereby I will be called; the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, and the Prince of Peace; would not all mankind believe the words were incapable of any lower ſenſe than what agrees to the ſupreme Being? And do they ſignify any leſs by the addition

SERM. II. tion of that clauſe, *To us a Child, a Son is given?* It is hard indeed upon thoſe who do not read the text with a drain, a criticiſm that ſucks out the main force of it.

What men of deep thought and vaſt abilities may do, I know not; thy have got the art of making Divine titles ſignify only a *creature*, and Divine worſhip only a *civility*: But other people will be at a loſs, who would gladly always ſpeak of God, as they ſpeak of no one beſides; who uſe words both *of* him, and *to* him, which they dare not give to any other Being. It will be difficult for ſuch as thoſe, to know how to talk, becauſe their beſt phraſes are gone: They will want language for devotion, if he muſt be called the Mighty God, who is *not* the Mighty God, and he the Everlaſting Father, who is *not* the Everlaſting Father. There is no getting higher than theſe terms: And can we imagine that God would uſe *great ſwelling words of vanity*, or ſay that of a child, which is downright falſe of every one but himſelf, if it was not true that our Saviour ſaith, *I and my Father are one?*

Joh. x. 30.

Another text that I think cannot be diverted from this interpretation is, Mic. v. 2. *Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall He come forth unto me, that is to be the Ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been of old from everlaſting.* Here we are under every neceſſity to ſuppoſe, that he ſpeaks of a *Meſſiah*, from the place of his birth. Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall HE come. This was a circumſtance that both Jews and Chriſtians were agreed in, that Chriſt ſhould come out of Bethlehem, the town where David dwelt; and that expreſſion, he ſhall come forth *unto me*, ſhews his errand that he was to be the Mediator between God and man: He ſhould *glorify the Father on earth: His meat and drink was to do the*

Joh. iv. 34.

the will of him that ſent him, and to finiſh his work. SERM. II.
Who is it then, that ſhould have his nativity at Bethlehem, and ſuch a concern with the great God? One whoſe goings forth have been of old, *from everlaſting.*

We will ſuppoſe for a while, that thoſe *goings forth of old* were no more than the manifeſtations that he made of himſelf to the Patriarchs and Prophets; it was *the Angel* who went before them in their marches from Egypt, and frequently appeared to them in the promiſed land. This ſenſe of the text does ſhew that he went forth *of old;* but what ſhall we do with the other word, *from everlaſting?* To ſay that this ſometimes ſignifies no more than a long while *to come,* when it is mentioned in *prophecy,* cannot be denied; but that therefore it ſignifies only a long while *paſt,* when it is delivered in *hiſtory,* is by no means to be allowed. Several things that ſhall periſh, are ſaid to be *for ever,* becauſe they will hold for many ages; but I do not know that any thing is *from eternity,* or has that title given to it, beſides the nature and counſels of God. *In his times he will ſhew who is the bleſſed and only Potentate; who only has immortality.* 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

To everlaſting, may be applied to Saints and Angels, and the happineſs of both; but it is only ſaid of One, FROM *everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.* Pſal. xc. 2. We may limit the paſſages that give the character of eternity for the time to come, but it was never once beſtowed upon any thing as to what is *paſt;* and therefore, if his goings forth of old, which have been *from everlaſting,* mean no more than that he has done thus for ſeveral ages, it is uſing the word as it never was uſed before, and ſo as no human thought can reconcile to ſenſe. It is falſe, it is monſtrous, and a groſs abſurdity to ſay, that any created perſon was from everlaſting, or that he was *before all things.* Had it been only that he was *from the beginning, or ever the earth was,* or that he had

SERM. II. a *glory with the Father before the world was*, ſome diminutive ſenſe might be forced in upon the words, that they only tell us he had a being antecedent to this creation; and could not an Angel have ſaid ſo too? If the phraſes mean no more than an exiſtence before our world, they make him *no better than the Angels. Thoſe ſtars of the morning ſung together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy*, when this earth of ours was made: So that, if that is all that Chriſt means, Prov. viii. he ſpeaks beneath himſelf.

Job xxxviii. 7.

The Angels had a *glory with the Father before the world was;* but the words under our preſent thoughts are not patient of ſuch an interpretation as is fixed with ſo much violence upon others; for here it ſaid, that he is *from everlaſting*. Angels have had their *goings forth of old:* They flew about this world of ours after it was put into ſhapes; but can it be ſaid of them without horrid blaſphemy, that they are *from everlaſting?* And therefore that which is here affirmed of the Prince that ſhould riſe out of Bethlehem, *the Man that is to be our peace*, is too much for a creature: It is a contradiction to all received being, eternally inconſiſtent with any beginning. It can never be ſaid of Him, that there was a time when he was not: We may apply to him in theſe words, *From everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.* But I ſhall open no more Scriptures now, in the purſuit of this argument; I ſee it will be better to diſtribute them under the ſeveral branches of the text that are yet to be conſidered.

6. That God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, has been the faith of good people in all ages: *As they believed in God, they believed in Chriſt.* This indeed, of itſelf, is no concluſive argument, becauſe our faith does not ſtand *in the wiſdom* or holineſs *of man, but in the power of God;* nevertheleſs, it is not to be deſpiſed. This was the great perſuaſive *to lay aſide*

Joh. xiv. 1.

2 Cor. ii. 5.

Heb. xii. 2, 2.

every

every weight, and the ſin that eaſily beſets us, becauſe we are *encompaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes.* We are *followers of them who through faith and patience do inherit the promiſes,* when we abide in the doctrine of Chriſt. SERM. 11. Heb. vi. 12.

That this has been the opinion of thoſe who have ſerved their generation according to the will of God, will ſcarce be denied. The quotations we have out of the ancient writers that ſeem to look another way, are to me of very little value, for this one reaſon, That as far as we can judge of the primitive church by the New Teſtament, the great controverſy was not ſo much about Chriſt's divinity, as his humanity. *Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh: This is a deceiver and an Antichriſt.* It was then, as he calls it, *the ſpirit of Antichriſt,* and *the ſpirit of error.* The opinion, I ſuppoſe, was not, that he never appeared to the world, but that he did not take upon him our real nature; it was not *in the fleſh.* This was the deluſion of thoſe times, which the holy writer confutes in ſo particular a manner: *That which was from the beginning, which we have ſeen, heard, looked upon, and which our hands have handled, declare we unto you.* This ſhews that Chriſt had more than a reſemblance of our nature. That was the error againſt which he delivers all his caution. *Beloved, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits, whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every ſpirit that confeſſes that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God; and every ſpirit that confeſſes not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is not of God: And this is that ſpirit of Antichriſt whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and even now already is it in the world.* It is more difficult to conceive that an Angel ſhould be made a man, than that he who is the great Mediator ſhould be a God. I 2 John 7. 1 John iv. 1, 2, 3.

think

SERM. II. think human reaſon would find more arguments againſt the truth of his death, than againſt the Divinity of his Perſon: And indeed we could not have believed either of theſe without a revelation;
1 Cor. i. 23. for *Chriſt crucified is to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.*

Now, I will ſuppoſe, that this opinion continued ſome time after; therefore it is no wonder that we find paſſages in the writings of the fathers, that tell us plainly that he was man: and on purpoſe to give this aſſertion the greater force and weight, they may have contrived a method of ſpeaking that has rendered them a little obſcure to poſterity. You may take theſe three things along with you.

Firſt, That it was certainly right in them to lay down the truth of our Saviour's Human Nature: this is a fundamental article; not only to our faith, as it regards the doctrines of Chriſtianity, but to our hope and comfort: Without this, he is not *the ſeed of the woman*, he has made no ſatisfaction, nor can he preſent us *in the body of his fleſh through death.*

Secondly, The vehemence of their aſſerting this, might be owing to the oppoſition that was made by unbelievers: This, as I have already ſhewn, ſeems to be the prevailing opinion; and therefore, perhaps, ſome learned and good men might exceed in the way they took to deliver themſelves. But,

Thirdly, It is very plain that many have ſpoiled
Col. ii. 8. the doctrine *through philoſophy and vain deceit:* I fear there were temptations to bring ſome men into the church whom the grace of God never brought thither, becauſe of their human learning. They perhaps were too much admired; they came to Chriſt Jeſus, not as learners, but as teachers, and thus threw in their own froth into the ſincere milk of the word, which curdled it upon the minds of
1 Cor. ii. 1, 4. men. The Apoſtle came not with any ὑπεροχὴ λόγε ἢ σοφίας, ſupereminence of phraſe or wiſdom, *declaring*

ring the teſtimony of God: He determined to know nothing among them but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. His ſpeech and preaching was not in theſe perſuading terms of human wiſdom, πειθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις, *but in the demonſtration of the Spirit and of power.* SERM. II.

Thoſe phraſes, Light of Light, God of God, very God of very God, have too much of the Philoſopher in them, and too little of the Chriſtian. It is not worth the while to contend about them, for they will be unintelligible when we have done all we can. To me it is of more value, what a company of ſerious perſons think in their devotions, who are filled with a reverence for God, and a jealouſy of ſin, than what is agreed upon by a ſet of preachers, who oftentimes meet only *to bite and devour one another.*

That which I lay the greateſt weight upon is, not ſo much that the Deity of Chriſt has been maintained and proved by perſons of vaſt abilities, men ſkilled in languages, hiſtory, and the methods of argument; but that it is a doctrine ſupported by *the witneſs of the Spirit* in the hearts of believers, as that which is *according to Godlineſs.* Feeling, I confeſs, is an individual argument: It is what a man cannot communicate to another; but ſtill all the world will allow me to regard thoſe principles that have had the beſt influence upon them that profeſſed them. I have ſeen people courageous in an evil day, devout and reverent in all the acts of worſhip, and cheerful to meet their death; and they have given THIS *as a reaſon* of the joy and *hope that was in them.* I muſt think well of the principles, unleſs I think very ill of the perſons.

This was the Apoſtle's great cordial: *Though I ſuffer theſe things, I ſhall not be aſhamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him againſt* 2 Tim. i. 12.

that

SERM. II. *that day.* You ſee his confidence is in the power, the *ability* of him on whom he depended; and that which repreſented him in this character was his in-
Eph. vi. 10. finite perfections. We ſtand *in the Lord, and in*
Jude 21. *the power of his might: We look for the mercy of*
24, 25. *the Lord Jeſus unto eternal life:* His mercy brings us into that life; and then he adds, *Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wiſe God our Saviour, be dominion and praiſe for ever.* We are preſerved by the mercy of the Lord Jeſus. He is here ſaid to *preſent us before his glory*, as elſewhere we read that he will *preſent us to himſelf*, and that he does it as *the only wiſe God our Saviour.*

This has made good people eaſy both in life and death: They have looked on him as *the reſurrection and the life.* What they have believed of his Divinity has gone deeper into their holineſs and comfort, than any other principle could do. This has been their ſupporting conſideration, the very thing that gave them all their courage. Thus the Spirit did his office by *taking the things of Chriſt, and ſhewing* them unto men: He ſhews us his life and his death, that the one was holy, and the other dreadful; but the glory that he gives to Chriſt, is upon other heads, as our Lord himſelf expounds
John xvi. 14, 15. it: *All that the Father has are mine, and therefore I ſaid, He ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you.* It was with reference to his union with the Father, his ſhare in the glory, the dominion, in all that the Father has, that the Spirit does thus *reveal* him.

7. If theſe good people were wrong in their opinion, it will obſcure all the experimental part of religion, the joys and pleaſures with which they gave themſelves to God; firſt in worſhip, and at laſt in death. What muſt we ſay for *the power of Godlineſs* after this? becauſe, when they reſted on a Saviour in the laſt acts of faith, when they look-

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ed unto Jesus in the closing moments of life, as *the Author and finisher of faith*, and in that regarded him as God, they must go out of the world in a gross idolatry. SERM. II.

Do not let any one tell me, I may give worship to him, though he is a creature, only my *greatest* devotion is paid *through him* to the Divine Nature. I know nothing that more expresses my dependence, or can be called worship in a truer sense, than the last offices of my faith on a death-bed. If bowing my head, and giving up the ghost, is not devotion, I know not what is; and I should be very unwilling in that hour to rely upon one who is less than God. As Mediator, he is not the proper object of our faith and hope, but only introduces and leads them in. BY HIM *we believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope may be* IN GOD; and certainly we would have our faith and hope in God when we die. No serious person would say less than David did, *Into thy hands do I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed it, O Lord God of truth.* Here his faith and hope were in God, as they ought to be. 1 Pet. i. 21. Psal. xxxi. 5.

But what shall we think of the martyr Stephen, when he cries out with a loud voice, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit:* Did *his* words contain any thing less than David's? Was not his dependence upon the same power? Did he not regard this Jesus as able to save him? And would he have ventured his spirit into any other hands than those of a God? Dare we say, that he did not die with a faith as well placed as David's? I am sure, if he to whom he committed his spirit is not God, he was guilty of perverting his allegiance in the greatest solemnity of all: It was too much to say to a creature. David had two things in view at that time. *First*, His own comfort, Into thy hands do I commit my spirit, for *thou hast redeemed it;* and, *secondly*, Acts vii. 59.

God's

SERM. II. God's glory. This was the laſt thing that he could do towards it, and therefore he gave him his titles, *O Lord God of truth.* Had he applied to any one beſides, he had loſt both theſe ends; he had been guilty of deſtroying his own peace, and of alienating from God the honour that he was bound to give him; but he had *none*, even *in heaven but God*, no creature above the Angels whom he could deſire beſides him. And did Stephen come any lower, when he ſaid, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit?* He did the greateſt, as well as the laſt thing that could be done, in a way of devotion and confidence: And had he any other in heaven beſides David's God? If ſo, the redemption of mankind, inſtead of drawing us *to* God, draws us *from* him. He that had no partner in his honour *before*, muſt have one *now*; and ſouls under the New Teſtament can die into the arms of a perſon who is not God, though they under the Old could not think of doing ſo without horror. But doubtleſs when Stephen ſaid this, he did not only conceive of Jeſus as a Jew after the fleſh, but as God over all, bleſſed for evermore.

Pſal. lxxiii. 25.

I have been told of a Gentleman, with whom I had the honour of ſome acquaintance, that as he lived many years in a public character, both in the Army and Parliament, he confeſſed to an intimate friend, from whom I have the ſtory, that he had for a long time many doubts about the Divinity of Chriſt; but, ſaith he, 'Now death is 'coming on, I find none but a God will do; and 'if he is not *that*, I cannot venture my ſoul into '*his hands*.'—If this is a falſehood, it is pity it ever ſhould be a dying principle. It is an Almighty act you know that makes us Chriſtians. *We are born of God*; and *he who has begun this good work, will perform it to the day of Chriſt*: And ſurely this can be no other than God; and therefore when we look to Jeſus as the Author and Finiſher

1 John. iii. 9.
Phil. i. 6.

Finiſher of faith, it is to him as *beginning* the good work, and to him as *performing* it. SERM. II.

8. If *he* is not God who was manifeſt in the fleſh, our cauſe is no better than that of the Jews; nay, in ſome reſpects, a great deal worſe. They had a noble diſpenſation: God revealed *himſelf* to them by ſigns, and wonders, and voices, by a mighty hand, and an out-ſtretched arm: He is ſaid to be *in the midſt of them:* They heard *his* voice: The cloud that covered the tabernacle was ſuch a preſence of the Deity as exceeded all that we know, if it was only a creature who came down among us. Now it is mentioned as the glory of theſe laſt days, that *God has ſpoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things.* There is no more in this than ſpeaking by Moſes, if he was not counted *worthy of more glory than Moſes;* and *that* he is not as a meſſenger, but as an author, *inaſmuch as he that builded the houſe has more honour than the houſe.* Heb. i. 1, 2.

Chriſt put himſelf into a meaner way than Moſes did: All the Prophets that ever went before him made a greater figure; but the diſtinction lay in this: *They ſaw his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father.* God had ſpoken to the world, ſometimes by Prophets, and ſometimes by Prieſts, who were the ſtanding miniſters of his houſe; and ſuppoſe now at laſt he had ſent down an Angel to be the preacher among us, this had been really a greater diſpenſation than what we are under: For though it is confeſſed that Chriſt had a nature above the Angels, yet as he appeared ſo much *lower than they*, that paſſes for nothing. John i. 14.

But the main glory of the diſpenſation conſiſts in this, *that his name is called Immanuel, which is God with us.* In a lower ſenſe, that might have been ſaid with truth of every hero, every Prophet, their Captains in the field, and their Prieſts in the temple, that God was with them; but it never was Mat. i. 23.

SERM. II. made the name of a perſon. If the moſt glorious Angel in heaven was to be ſent down as the General of our forces, or a Teacher in our aſſemblies, and a bleſſing attended him, it might be ſaid we had the Divine preſence, but we muſt never have called him Immanuel. So that it ſignifies *that* in our Saviour, which it could not have done in any creature. It is the character of his *perſon*. You muſt not apply it to the ſpiritual preſence of God with his people, for there has been more of *that* ſince Chriſt's time than there was before. He was with us in a greater glory at the day of Pentecoſt, and in a more populous converſion. But when this is ſaid of a child that ſhould be born, it is abſtracted from all ſucceſſes; in having HIM, we have
John xiv. 9. 10. *God with us. He that had ſeen him, had ſeen the Father;* ſo that there was no need to ſay, *Shew us the Father: He was in the Father, and the Father in him.* GOD himſelf was manifeſt in the Fleſh. This exceeds all that ever the Jews had; and therefore their privileges are mentioned in a riſing
Rom. ix. 4, 5. way, *To them pertained the adoption, the covenants, the giving of the law, the glory, the promiſes.* In ſome of theſe they go beyond us: We have nothing equal to the giving of the law that was *ordained by Angels*, and the *Glory* that covered their tabernacle and filled their temple: *Theirs were the Fathers;* but the laſt, in which our intereſt is comprehended, is greater than all the reſt, that *of them, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came.* How comes that to be the crowning privilege, but as he is *over all, God bleſſed for ever?*

9. If he was not God, his manifeſtation in the fleſh would not have anſwered the great ends for which it is appointed. He came as an *High Prieſt*
Eph. i. 22, 23. to make atonement, as a *King* of ſaints to be *Head over all things to his Church*; and this he could not be without the *fulneſs of him who fills all in all.*

10. The

10. The character of Deity may be allowed here, because the Spirit has carried it through all the other branches of the Mystery :—As a God he is *justified in the Spirit*, declared to be the *Son of God* with power, by the Spirit of holiness in the resurrection from the dead. As a God he is *seen of Angels ;* for when the Father brings the first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the Angels worship HIM. As a God he is *preached unto the Gentiles ; Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth ; for I am the* LORD, *and there is none else.* As a God he is *believed on in the world*, for our faith and hope must be *in God.* And as a God he is *received up into glory ;* for to the Son it is said, *Thy throne O God is for ever and ever.* SERM 11. Rom. i. 4. Heb. i. 6. Isa. xlv. 22. 1 Pet. i. 21. Heb. i. 8.

SERMON XII.

Sept. 14. 1718.

II. THE great Mystery of Godliness tells us, that this God was MANIFESTED. The Revelation he has made of himself is the ground of all our religion. Without it there could be no worship and no hope : Our drawing nigh to him, and all our expectations from him, are only the rebound of those discoveries in which he has appeared to us. The Psalmist has placed these things in their true order, *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face Lord will I seek.* Psal. xxvii. 8.

The good of any dispensation arises from the degrees it gives us of this divine knowledge. Whatever sets out the Author of our being in a truer and greater light, must be the more desirable : And

SERM. 12. And therefore, on this account, the Goſpel that is preached in *theſe laſt days* exceeds all the older methods of devotion, becauſe *there* we have a better manifeſtation of God. As we can have nothing higher than eternal life, ſo *this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent.*

John xvii. 2, 3.

Under this head I ſhall enquire in what characters God is to be known of men, by which it will appear, that the New Teſtament ought to have the preference that the Holy Spirit has given it, to all the other revelations that were ever made; becauſe the main ſubject of our miniſtry is *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, and the ſucceſs of it is *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in* the perſon or *face*, ἐν προσώπῳ, of Jeſus Chriſt.

2 Cor. iv. 5, 6.

The queſtion then before us is, What we are to know of God in order to the practice of duty, and the aſſurance of hope; under what notions are we to receive him into our minds? I anſwer, 1. As the God that made us and all the world. 2. As the Object of an univerſal worſhip. 3. As our Lawgiver. 4. As our Judge. 5. As an offended Sovereign. 6. As the Author of reconciliation. 7. As the Contriver of a ſufficient righteouſneſs. 8. As the Fountain of that Grace by which we are reſtored to his image. 9. As the great Example of holineſs and purity. 10. As the Giver of thoſe joys that are laid up in another world.

Under theſe characters has the great God revealed himſelf to us. Thus he is to be known, and upon theſe grounds to be admired with reverence and a Godly fear. He has in various ways and different meaſures given out theſe glories of his name; but the beſt appearance in which we have them all, is the ſending of his Son *in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, and the publication of his Word to mankind: Thus he has *aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Goſpel.* We have the

2 Tim. i. 10.

light

light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. Several of these manifestations are what the Heathen lived under; but in regarding them I shall have three things in my view: First, The impressing of this truth upon you, that *thus* we are to conceive of the great God in all our applications to him; secondly, That even in those common ideas that we have of him, the Gospel has given us a *peculiar* evidence; and, thirdly, That all these titles belong to our blessed Saviour, which I hope you will find as we advance through the several particulars. SERM. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

1. One manifestation that God has made of himself is in a character that gives us our most early concern with him, that he is *the Former of all things. We come before him with a song, and enter into his presence with thanksgiving,* because *he is the Lord our God, we are the work of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture; he has made us, and not we ourselves.* This account of himself he has scattered all over the universe. It is said of those who have no revealed religion, that *what may be known of God is manifest in them, and shewn to them:* Nay, *the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that do appear, even his eternal power and Godhead.* The volumes that he has published of his own perfections, are large and copious. *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament shews his handy-work; day unto day utters speech, and night unto night declares knowledge; and there is no voice or language where their speech is not heard.* Psal. c. 2, 3. Rom. i. 19, 20. Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

But yet even this common argument is placed in a better light by the coming of Jesus Christ: He lets us understand the creation to more advantage. He has adjusted, improved, and enlightened the principles of nature: So that *by faith we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God, for the things that are, were not made of things* Heb. xi. 3.

that

SERM. 12. *that do appear.* You muſt not think that natural religion gives us one God and Chriſtianity another.

Acts xvii. 23. The Apoſtle tells the Athenians, *Him whom ye ignorantly worſhip, declare I unto you.* They might, by his inſtructions, know the Deity in a better way than they ever would have done by obſervation and philoſophy. He ſpeaks of him under princi-

ver. 24. ples which they confeſſed; *God that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.* He argues, you ſee, from our primitive notions of the Divine Nature, to ſhew the folly of all

— 25. ſuperſtition: *Neither is he worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing.* This indeed is what thoſe confuſed idolaters could not imagine; but he draws it from a principle which every one owned, *ſeeing that he gives to all life and breath, and all things.* With this reaſon he batters down

— 29. their impure devotions, *We ought not to think the Godhead is like unto ſilver or gold, or ſtone graven by art or man's device.* This corruption they were run into; and though it is unworthy of thoſe ſentiments which themſelves allowed, yet it was the Goſpel alone that ſet them at liberty from the contradiction they offered to their own principles.

— 30. *The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commands all men every where to repent.*

The world never knew him aright as a *Creator*, till he revealed himſelf as a *Redeemer.* In the ſcheme of ſalvation we ſee how the univerſe came by its form and its being. When God was manifeſt in the Fleſh we beheld our Author. It is ſaid

John i. 3. 4, 10. of him that came among us, that *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made; in him was life: He was in the world, and the world was made by him, though the world knew him not.* In this Revelation we contemplate *the Lord our Maker.* This truth lies open in the ſcheme of redemption, to be ſeen and read

read of all men: *God has in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed to be the heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds.* This is part of the diſcovery that we have by the Goſpel, *to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery that has been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt.* When he ſaith, that *his rejoicing was in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights among the ſons of men,* he takes care to tell us, that *at the preparing of the heavens He was there, that He ſet a compaſs upon the face of the deep, He eſtabliſhed the clouds above, He gave to the ſea his decree, that the waters ſhould not paſs His commandment, He appointed the foundations of the earth.* SERM. 12. Heb. i. 1, 2. Eph. iii. 9. Prov. viii. 27, 28, 29. 31.

The Child that is born to us, is no other than *the Mighty God.* This *Lord in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands: They ſhall periſh, but He remains; as a veſture He ſhall fold them up, and they ſhall be changed; but He is the ſame, and His years ſhall not fail.* The honours they pay him in heaven are upon this head. The Apoſtle John had much the ſame viſion with the Prophet Iſaiah: The Angels about his throne are crying out, *Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty;* and what they add to it, *Who is, and was, and is to come,* determines the application of the titles, that *theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of* HIM. They caſt their crowns before his throne, ſaying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power, for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.* This is ſaid of Him, who *upholds all things by the word of His power,* and who, *having by himſelf purged our ſins, for ever ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high.* The characters are conjoined, *He is the Head of the body the Church, the beginning, He is before all things, and by Him all things conſiſt.* He that has *aſcended into heaven, and deſcended, has gathered* Iſa ix. 6. Heb i. 10, 11, 12. Iſa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. John xii. 41. Rev. iv. 11. Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 17, 18. Prov. xxx. 4.

SERM. 12. *gathered the winds in His fiſts, and bound the waters in a garment, and eſtabliſhed all the ends of the earth.*

1 Pet. iv. 19. In the laſt act of reſignation we *commit the keeping of our ſouls to Him, as a faithful Creator.* It may be ſaid of Him in the whole Revelation of the Goſpel, *Is not he thy Father who has bought thee, has not he made thee and eſtabliſhed thee?*

Deut. xxxii. 6.

2. He is manifeſted as the object of univerſal worſhip: This flows from the former as a practical inference: *Let us worſhip and bow down before the Lord our Maker. He has made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth, and determined the times before appointed, and fixed the bounds of their habitation, that they might ſeek him, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, for he is not far from any one of* them.

Pſal. xcv. 6. Acts xvii. 26, 27.

This argument is more preſſed in the Goſpel than in any other diſpenſation; as the Apoſtles told thoſe at Lyſtra, *We are men of like paſſions with you, and preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities to the living God, who has made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein: who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways; but now,* in this Revelation, he ſhews them what a violence they offered to their own principles: though the Goſpel does not give them their notions of God, yet it works and rules them. Their opinion that he is the Author of all things, paſſes for nothing; it does them no good till a true religion ſets it home; for *none of them ſaith, Where is God my Maker, who gives ſongs in the night?* Thus we come to be directed in our worſhip: and therefore the Epheſians, who were ſuperſtitious enough, being keepers of the image that fell from Jupiter, are ſaid to be not only *without Chriſt, aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe,* but *without God in the world.* Though they pretended to worſhip him, their notions were either falſe or feeble; their belief in God

—xiv. 15, 16.

Job xxxv. 10.

Eph. ii. 12.

as

as the supreme Cause, and the last End, was totally disabled. These truths lay in their minds as in a hospital, unactive and impotent. They could not worship him even as a Creator. It is said of the Thessalonians, that upon the preaching of the Gospel, *they turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.* Though these notions seem to be scattered over the world, yet there was a time when the Galatians *knew not God*, but *did service to those who by nature were no gods;* but he is now manifested as *the hearer of prayer, that unto him all flesh may come.* SERM. 12. 1 Thess. i. 9. 10. Gal. iv. 8. Psal. lxv. 2.

He that came in the flesh has made known himself as the Object of Adoration. We have a prophecy of the happiness that is to flow over all the earth: *The ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations. All that be fat upon the earth, shall eat and worship, and they that go down to the dust, shall bow before him.* The 72d is called a Psalm for Solomon, but you will by the characters be convinced, that a greater than Solomon is mentioned there: *All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him; his name shall endure for ever, his name shall continue as long as the sun; men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.* Psal. xxii. 27, 28, 29. —lxxii. 11. 17.

3. Another manifestation that we have of God, and in which the Gospel exceeds all that went before, is that he is a *Lawgiver;* from him we receive the rules of our duty: *He has shewn what is good, and what he requires of us.* Some degree of this light was given to the Heathen: *They having not the law, were a law unto themselves: They had the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing them witness, and their thoughts* Mic. vi. 8. Rom. ii. 14, 15.

SERM. 12. *in the mean while accuſing or excuſing one another.*
Rom. i. 21. It was an aggravation of their ſin, that *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations.*

But what are all theſe diſcoveries, if compared
Tit. ii. 11, 12. to *the grace of God, that brings ſalvation, teaching to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world?* The Jews had ſuch a manifeſtation for ſeveral ages,
Pſ. cxlvii. 19. as had not been given to any other nation: *He ſent his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and judgments unto Iſrael.* But in theſe laſt days, ſince he has ſpoken to us by his Son, the way of God is taught more
Rom. iii. 31. perfectly. The law is not *made void through faith;*
Mat. v. 17. but as he came in Perſon to *fulfil it*, ſo his Goſpel
Rom. iii ult. is given to *eſtabliſh it.* It is only a God who can give a command. This character is united to thoſe
Iſa. xxxiii. 22. that contain the greateſt glory: *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, and he will ſave us.* And therefore,

If you find that He who was manifeſt in the Fleſh, took upon him this title, (as the Jews ſaid,
Joh. v. 18. he *made himſelf equal with God,*) this, without a Divine Nature, would have been arrogance in him, as much as any other man. We muſt confound the characters of Chriſt and Antichriſt, if they are both creatures. It ſtands as the glaring impiety of
2 Theſ. ii. 4. the latter, that he *exalts himſelf above all that is called God, or is worſhipped; that he ſits in the temple of God, giving out himſelf that he is God.* He makes laws for conſcience, and does that which is peculiar to the Deity: And if the great Redeemer did ſo too, nothing could take off the charge of blaſphemy, but a ſuppoſition that he was truly God: And thus did the Apoſtles declare him. Peter tells
Acts x 36. Cornelius of their *preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt,*
1 Cor. ix. 21. *who is Lord of all.* Paul was *not without law to God,* but ἔννομος Χριστῷ, *under the law to Chriſt.* Thus
Acts ix. 6. he made his approach to him at firſt, *Lord, what*

wilt

wilt THOU *have me to do?* This is language that ought not to be uſed to a creature; and you may obſerve, that he ſaid it after he had enquired who this Lord was, and received his anſwer, *I am Jeſus of Nazareth whom thou perſecuteſt.* He reſigns himſelf to this *Perſon* with the ſame unreſerve as David did, *Lord, I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant.* It is as much as if he had ſaid, *I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak.* Agreeable to this is the ſtyle of a Redeemer: he tells Ananias of Saul, *He is a choſen veſſel unto* ME, *to bear* MY *name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Iſrael.* Ananias comes to him with that meſſage, *Brother Saul, the Lord, even* JESUS *that appeared to thee in the way that thou cameſt, has ſent me that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* We are told in this place, that the Lord who ſent him was Jeſus. Compare this with Acts xxii. 14. where you find the ſame ſtory, and there it is, *The God of our fathers has choſen thee, that thou ſhouldſt know his will, and ſee the Juſt One, and hear the voice of his mouth; and now, why tarrieſt thou? waſh away thy ſins, and be baptized, calling on the name of the* LORD. What Lord? You read afterwards, *I ſaw* HIM *ſaying unto me, Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem, for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning* ME.

SERM. 12.

Pſal. cxvi. 16. — lxxxv. 8.

Acts ix. 15.

ver. 17.

It is with this mixture of characters, ſome relating to the Human Nature and ſome to the Divine, that he repeats the ſtory to King Agrippa. As he there ſaith, he received his miſſion immediately from Chriſt himſelf, who ſpake thus to him, *I will make thee a miniſter and a witneſs of the things that thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles to whom now I ſend thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God, to give them remiſſion of ſins, and an inheritance among them that*

Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18.

SERM. 12. *that are ſanctified by faith in* ME. Chriſt undertook to deliver him from the people, and with regard to that promiſe the Apoſtle ſaith, *Having obtained help from* GOD, *I continue to this day.* 'He 'that thus far helped me, is the ſame God who ſaid 'that he would deliver me.' How would they go upon a deſign of opening peoples eyes, and turning them from Satan, if it was not a *God* who *cauſed them to triumph, and made manifeſt the good ſavour of his knowledge by them in every place?*

Acts xxvi. 22.

2 Cor. ii. 14.

4. The Goſpel gives us a manifeſtation of the great God under the character of a *Judge.* This agrees with thoſe ſentiments that have left ſome tincture of religion all over the world. The Heathen have their inward fears of a judgment to come; that there will be future enquiries: Conſcience witneſſes to this, according to its office; for *it is the candle of the Lord ſearching into the innermoſt parts of the belly.* And yet this opinion that mankind believes in general, is brought in among thoſe that we never could have without a particular Revelation, that *God is Judge of all, and Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant: And the blood of ſprinkling ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel.* Thoſe two principles ſeem to be rivetted in us, idolatry has not choked them, that *it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment.*

Heb. xii. 24.

Now, he that performs this work muſt be a God. The queſtion is not, whether he that ſits upon the throne, will not appear in *our nature;* but his *capacity* to go through the grand inqueſt, muſt ariſe from *another nature.* As the Son of Man, he might be pure, *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners;* but this could not furniſh him with the knowledge of the ſecrets of all hearts: And therefore, though he is like the ſons of men, yet he ſpeaks to his people in the language of the Great God, *I will kill her children with death, and all the churches ſhall know that I am he who ſearches the hearts*

Rev. ii. 23.

hearts and reins, and I will give to every one of you according to your works. It may be ſaid of ſuch an one, *Great is this Lord, and of great power, and his underſtanding is infinite.* If *we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of* CHRIST, *there to receive what we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil,* it argues the higheſt perfection in him. SERM. 12. Pſ. cxlvii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 10.

The Jews could never conceive that an ability to judge the world was ſeparable from the Divine Nature. None but He who *formed the ſpirit of man within him,* is capable of ſearching the heart and the reins. The Lord God is *the Judge of the earth; he that planted the eye, he that formed the ear. Our God ſhall come, and not keep ſilence: He ſhall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may judge his people: The heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs, for* GOD *is Judge* HIMSELF. *Hear, O my people, and I will ſpeak, I am God, even thy God.* Thus the Jews were obliged to think; and can we ſuppoſe that the Goſpel has committed the ſupreme judgment to one who has not infinite perfections? Did their diſpenſation under the Old Teſtament proclaim, and that ſo truly, that *God was Judge of all:* And does ours under the New, by placing it in the hands of the Son, make it to be the work of a creature? Muſt we ſay that the *Jewiſh* religion over-rated the matter, and that the *Chriſtian* ſhews us a great deal leſs will do than we were taught to imagine before? That though they uſed to think that nothing beneath the Divine Nature was fit for the judgment-ſeat, yet we find that a mere titular god will do well enough for the greateſt ſolemnity that ever was performed? What ſenſe then muſt we put upon thoſe words? *I ſaw a great white throne, and Him that ſat on it; from whoſe face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.* I cannot but think when he ſpeaks of this mighty Perſon, he means the ſame whom we read of in the next verſe, Pſ. xciv. 2. 9. —l. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Rev. xx. 11, 12.

SERM. 12. *I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before* GOD. Though he is called the Son of Man, when he enters upon the judgment, yet he is then ſaid to come *in the glory of the Father.*

5. God is manifeſted to us as one whom we Rom. iii. 23. have diſhonoured; the offended party. *All fleſh has ſinned and fallen ſhort of the glory of God.* This is the voice of all true religion; and thus he is diſcovered in and through a Mediator. *Behold*, ſaith Exod xxiii. 20. he to the Jews, *I ſend an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your tranſgreſſions, for my Name is in him; but if thou ſhalt indeed obey* HIS *voice, and do all that I ſpeak*, (you ſee how theſe are mingled and wove together), *then will I be an enemy to thine enemies, and an adverſary to thine adverſaries, for mine Angel* Ch. xxxiii. 2. *ſhall go before thee.* This he repeats, *I will ſend an Angel before thee, and I will drive out the inhabitants.* I take the promiſe to be the ſame, when ver. 14. he ſaith, MY *preſence ſhall go with thee, and I will give thee reſt.* No leſs than this would ſatisfy Moſes, for his anſwer is, *If* THY *preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence*, (they could take up with no lower than a God), *for wherein ſhall it be honour, that I and thy people have found grace in thy ſight? is it not in that* THOU *goeſt with us?* What he calls *his Angel* in one edition of the promiſe, he calls *his Preſence* in another. The Prophet brings Iſa. lxiii. 9. both theſe terms together, *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence*, (He that was always before him, daily his delight, he) *ſaved them, he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* This Angel they muſt obey, and not provoke; but they did provoke him when they refuſed to go into the promiſed land. *They tempted the Lord ſaying, Is the Lord, is Jehovah, among us or* Pſ. xcv. 8. *not?* He calls this *the day of provocation, and the day*

day of temptation in the wilderneſs. Then they provoked him, or they provoked his Angel, contrary to the rule that had been given them. This in the New Teſtament is called *their tempting of Chriſt.* And we are told, that *Chriſt is a Son over his own houſe, whoſe houſe we are, if we hold faſt the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end.* We are not to uſe him as they did; fly off at laſt; when we ſhould juſt go into the promiſed land, give way and fall back; but hold on our hope unto the end: *For the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts:* Whoſe voice? the voice of GOD, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *The Great God, the Great King above all Gods, who has the ſtrength of hills in his hand:* The voice of CHRIST, ſaith the Apoſtle. Judge then, by comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, whether or not He who was manifeſt in the Fleſh is not the *God of Iſrael.*

SERM. 12.

1 Cor. x. 9.

Heb. iii. 6.

ver. 7.

We ſee that God who is a conſuming fire, becomes converſable by appearing in our nature. Diſobedience to him, as the light that came into the world, is the great condemnation; which ſhews the importance of his name. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins; he that believes not is condemned already; the wrath of God abides on him.* And is want of duty to a creature ſo very dangerous? Muſt it be a damning thing that we fail in our reſpect to one who is not God? I look upon that as the greateſt abomination which the Papiſts have brought into their religion, that a contempt of the Pope, or diſobedience to his laws, is a higher crime than blaſphemy. And what is it that makes their notion ſo horrible, but the infinite diſtance of a poor ſinful man from the ſupreme God? If he was really as great and good as he declares himſelf, he might demand all this homage. And ſhall we ſuppoſe the ſame reproach upon Chriſtianity itſelf? Shall it be more dangerous to refuſe

Joh. iii. 18. 36.

SERM. 12. fuſe Chriſt Jeſus, than to violate a righteous law?
Joh. xvi. 9. Is the main ſin of which the Holy Spirit *convinces the world*, their *not believing on* HIM? Is it this that binds all our other guilt upon us? And is not He a God whom we thus diſtinguiſh? if not, we are guilty of *ſerving the creature more than the Creator.*

6. When God manifeſts himſelf, it is as the Author of our *reconciliation.* He has *a deſire to the work of his own hands;* without this diſcovery all the reſt had been in vain. It is to no purpoſe that he is our Creator, if by breaking his law we have reduced things to ſuch an extremity, that *he that made us will have no mercy on us, and he that formed us will ſhew us no favour.* He is our Lawgiver, but that raiſes in us no other than dreadful expec-
Gal. iii. 10. tations; for *as many as are under the law are under the curſe, becauſe it is written, Curſed is every one who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* As he is our Judge, we are filled with the terrors of the Lord: There
Heb. x. 27. is *a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and*
Tit. iii. 4. *fiery indignation;* but in this Revelation, *the love and kindneſs of God our Saviour towards man has appeared.*

Now, he that makes this diſcovery, can be no other than a God: He made known his reſentment,
Pſal. xc. 11. and did it in a way ſuitable to his majeſty: *Who knows the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath!* and from Him the day-ſtar on high is to ſhine forth: He employed his meſſengers in all ages to give notice of this ſalvation: Prophets, and Kings, and righteous men have foretold what ſhould happen in the fulneſs of time.
Heb. i. 1. And *He who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake unto the fathers in times paſt by the Prophets, has in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son.* What was there in this Son more than the other meſſengers, if we are not to conſider him as a God? It

is

is the *message* that we are chiefly concerned in; SERM. 12.
the *thing* itself that is brought, and not the *person* that brings it: So that it is the same to us, whether it comes by a shepherd or a king, by a man or an Angel. But when he tells us of speaking *by his Son*, it is plain we are called to admire not only the doctrine but the Preacher, who is *the Heir of all things, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* To this agrees what our Lord saith in the parable, That a king sent to his subjects one servant, and him they shamefully intreated; again he sent others, whom they wounded, and stoned, and killed; at last, saith he, *I will send to them my Son.* The demand of their allegiance took its value from the king himself, to whom they owed it, not from the quality of the men that brought it. But when the *son* came, they were to consider not merely what he *said*, but who he *was*. This, say they, *is the heir;* he is a party in the claim, *therefore come let us kill him.*

If there was not the same regard due to Christ that there is to the Father, we should be no gainers by his coming; John the Baptist might have done as well. God could have told us all by *him* that he did by Jesus, and might have conveyed the same power of working miracles to the one, that was so surprising in the other; but speaking to us *by his Son*, is taking a way that is infinitely above all the rest. Others are said to *speak on* Heb. xii. *earth*, and he, as distinct from every one besides, 25. does alone *speak from heaven. No man ascended up* Joh. iii. 13. *to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.* In other cases the message greatened the man: Nothing higher could be said of a Prophet, than that the word of the Lord was with him. Jeremiah was a child, Amos a gatherer of sycamore fruit, but they were ennobled by the word they came with, because it was not their own; they had received it from

SERM 12. God. But in this caſe the meſſage takes a value from the Perſon that brings it, it does not give him his dignity, but rather ſuppoſes it: It is to be taken for granted, that *he is the brightneſs of the Father's glory;* if he was not *that*, the diſpenſation that he filled would not have exceeded all the reſt; but *being* ſo, he did *by Himſelf* purge away our ſins.

He preached righteouſneſs and ſalvation in another way than we do. The word of reconciliation is committed to us, but we ſend people to *him* as
John vii. 37. he invited them to himſelf, *If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink: in him was life, and that life was the light of men.* John the Baptiſt was a burning and a ſhining light, yet *he was not that light* in the more eminent ſenſe of the word, but only *ſent to bear witneſs of that light; for Chriſt is the true light that lightens every man who comes into the world.* Theſe things ſhew us, that He of whom they are ſpoken, can be no other than the true God. All the revelation of the Bible places Him in that view. We are taught to regard him as ſuch; to believe in him, to come to him, and to reſt our ſouls upon his righteouſneſs and ſtrength.

Sept. 28. 1718.

SERMON XIII.

7. GOD is MANIFESTED to us as the Author or Contriver of that righteouſneſs in which we are juſtified. Here the light of nature
1 Cor. i. 21. fails us; the world with all *their wiſdom knew not God.* They had apprehenſions that he made them,
Acts xiv. 17. ruled them, and would judge them; nay, he *left*

not

not himſelf without witneſs to his mercy, *giving them rain and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs.* They found his bounty in this world, and had ſome looſe and general hopes of meeting it in another; but the way how this ſhould be brought about with a glory to his juſtice, was a *wiſdom hid from ages and generations.* SERM. 13.

Now, by the Goſpel we are not only told, that *God is reconciling the world unto himſelf*, but the method into which he has thrown the whole deſign, lies open to our faith and love; that it is *in Chriſt Jeſus, not imputing our treſpaſſes to us, but having made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, we are made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* It is here alone we can learn what ſecurity he has given to the honour of his name, and what compaſs he takes in the diffuſions of his love. *Him has God ſet forth to be a propitiation for our ſins through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believes in Jeſus.* The diſpenſation that ſhews us all this, is the moſt fitted to our happineſs. *What the law could not do in that it was weak through the fleſh*, the impoſſible of the law, τὸ ἀδύνατον τῦ νόμυ, God has brought about by *ſending his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and by ſin* (the imputation of it, or the ſacrifice that was made for it) *has condemned ſin in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the law may be fulfilled in us.* Under the New Teſtament we have the beſt light both into the deſign that God has formed, and the methods by which he will promote it. *The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.* This made the Apoſtle ſay, he was *not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt.* The expreſſion contains a great deal more than it opens: He was not aſhamed, *i. e.* he delighted, he gloried in it: No labour could

2 Cor. v. 19. 21.

Rom. iii. 25, 26.

Ch. viii. 3, 4.

Heb. vii. 19.

make

SERM. 13. make him weary, no ſufferings could make him
Rom. i. 16. bluſh; becauſe this Goſpel *was the power of God*
17. *to the ſalvation of every one that believes;* and that which conveys ſo noble a title to it is, becauſe *therein the righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith.*

Here faith ſees what it has to truſt to, and where the ſoul muſt keep relying, do it over and over again; and that is upon *the righteouſneſs of* GOD. This is the name that it often goes by. We are told
— x. 3. that the *Jews being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of* GOD. This title, the righteouſneſs of God, is to be underſtood of a righteouſneſs that God has contrived, and *God* brought in; that the Perſon who gives it to us, is *God*: That this is the ſenſe of the word, appears from the oppoſition in which it is placed to a righteouſneſs of *their own.* What was this but their obedience either to the moral or the ceremonial law? Now, *that* might be called the righteouſneſs of God, as their zeal for it was a *zeal of God*, ver. 2. It is what he had appointed and commanded; nay, he tells them, this ſhould be *their righteouſneſs before the nations of the earth*; but then, it is what themſelves *brought in.* Now *the righteouſneſs of God*, which bears the name in this place, is diſtinguiſhed from theirs, and the difference between them is in nothing elſe but this, that their righteouſneſs was the work of men, the obedience of creatures, but the other was the obedience of a God. Our Saviour when he died had this before him, as the Angel Gabriel tells Daniel,
Dan. ix. 26. that *the Meſſiah was to be cut off, but not for Himſelf:* Who was it for then? for thoſe that wanted his benefits, when *he finiſhed tranſgreſſion, made an end of ſin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs.* This was it that the Jews were ignorant of, and refuſed to ſubmit

mit themſelves unto: They could not take Chriſt as *the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believes.* That which they rejected was the righteouſneſs of God, which none but an Infinite Nature was capable of giving to the world; and therefore the Apoſtle is very full and particular in deſcribing it. His deſire was to be *found in Chriſt, not having on his own righteouſneſs which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* Faith regards it as it ſtands in itſelf, and then receives or applies it as belonging to us. What faith depends on is *the righteouſneſs of God;* ſomething that an Infinite Nature has done. SERM. 13. Rom. x. 4. Phil. iii. 9.

Upon this account, the Perſon who came to ſave us in the name of the Lord, is called as no creature can be, *Jehovah our righteouſneſs;* that is an incommunicable title, what God never gave to another: *Thou alone whoſe name is Jehovah, art the moſt High over all the earth.* There are gods many, and lords many, but there is no more than one JEHOVAH; and if He in whom we are juſtified joins the greateſt word that we have in any language with the relation that he bears to us, if he is called *Jehovah our righteouſneſs*, it ſhews that he who made the atonement is God. Under this title, which is all Divine, has he recommended himſelf to the faith and the joys of his people: *Sing unto God, ſing praiſes to his name, extol him that rides upon the heavens, by his name* JAH, *and rejoice before him.* His riding upon the heavens does plainly belong to thoſe *chariots of God which are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of Angels.* And *when* does he uſe them? what mighty period do theſe words refer to? You will ſee by the next verſe, *Thou haſt aſcended up on high;* and for this we are to extol him by his name JAH. The Author of that righteouſneſs in which we are to be found muſt be a God; one that is *fellow to the Lord of hoſts.* Jer. xxiii. 6. Pſ. lxxxiii. 18. Pſ. lxviii. 4. ver. 17. ver. 18. Zech. xiii. 7.

This

SERM. 13. This gave a virtue to all his sufferings, and there-
Acts xx. 28. fore we read of *the Church of God*, which HE *purchased with his own blood.* If an Angel had come down into our nature, blood would never have been ascribed to him any further than he was man. It was only the human nature that could bleed, and therefore whatever is more than man, was not to *endure* but to *dignify* the sufferings. Now, on purpose to let us know, that nothing but a Divine atonement could answer the demands of a Divine justice, we are told that the purchase was made by
Heb. ix. 14. *the blood of God. The blood of Christ, who through*
— xiii. 20. *the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, is to purge our conscience.* And *the God of peace brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.* Upon this, God's pardoning a sinner becomes an act of
1 Joh. i. 7. 9. equity: *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin, and therefore he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*

8. God is manifest as the Author and Fountain of those graces by which we are wrought into his image. In order to be happy with him, we must
Eph. iv. 23, 24. be conformed to him, being *renewed in the spirit of our minds, and putting on the new man,* which, κατὰ Θεὸν, according to God, *is created in righteousness.* It is impossible that heaven itself should make him glorious, and us blessed, if *his* nature was full of resentment, and *ours* of provocation. If two cannot *walk* together except they be agreed, much less can they *live* together in the duration of another state; that would only be an eternal broil, an everlasting jealousy. Now, as he has revealed himself to be our Lawgiver, so from Him we are to derive the whole of that Being, that will make us the *people of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture.*

And the Gospel tells us upon this head, that all
Acts iv. 12. our religion comes from the *only Name that is given under heaven among men.* That is all along the language

language of the New Testament: *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;* not barely the revelation, but the conveyance came by him: for as he was *full of grace and truth,* so *of his fulness we have received, and grace for grace. This is the record that God has given to us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life.* It is expressed in such a way as tells us, we can only have it by a mystical union with him. *We are in him that is true, even his Son Jesus Christ: This is the true God, and this is eternal life: in him was life, and that life was the light of men.* In him was life, as in a God; for if you take it in any lower sense, it is no more than may be said of a man, or of a worm. But, as he tells us in another place, *As the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself;* and, *as the Father quickens the dead, so the Son quickens whom he will.* It may be said of us as to a religious existence, *In him we live and move, and have our being: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can we except we abide in him: Without him we can do nothing.* When grace is begun or received, *Christ is formed in us; he dwells in our hearts by faith.* By the union that he has with his people, every principle is maintained, as he tells the Father, *I in them, and thou in me.* Though he was then going out of the world, he still desires to be *in them,* which cannot be understood of an external conversation with them. *I have declared thy name unto them, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.* He considers himself in them, though he was to be in heaven, and they upon earth, according to the promise that he had formerly given them; *Because I live, ye shall live also; and in that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and I in you.*

SERM. 13.
Joh. i. 17.
1 Joh. v. 10, 11.
ver. 20.
Joh. i. 4.
Joh. v. 26.
ver. 21.
Joh. xv. 4, 5.
Gal. iv. 19.
Eph. iii. 17.
Joh. xvii. 23.
Joh. xvii. ult.
Ch. xiv. 19, 20.

SERM. 13. *you.* From this the Apoſtle argues an immortality
Rom. viii. 10. both in our principles and our heaven: *If Chriſt be in us, the ſpirit is life,* and *Chriſt in us is our hope of glory.*

Now, He that ſuſtains theſe characters can be no
Eph. iv. 6. other than God. It is *the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* We have a communion with the Angels, but are never ſaid to be *in them,* or to have them *in us;* whereas, if the expreſſion means nothing but a mutual fellowſhip, it might well enough be uſed in that ſenſe. But the word ſignifies a great deal more; an union, ſubſiſtence, and a derivation, that
1 John. iv. 12, 13. none but the Divine Nature can give us. *God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, be-*
Ver. 15, 16. *cauſe he has given us of his Spirit. Whoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.* If there is no more deſigned by this dwelling in God than our doing what pleaſes him, we might be ſaid to dwell in the Saints and Angels; but the words ſignify an happineſs which none but a God can give. They expreſs ſomething that is peculiar to Him, and what would never be affirmed of us with relation to any creature. Therefore when it is ſaid that *Chriſt is in us,* it denotes His glory as well as our dependence.

There is no ſuch union with any but a God.
1 Pet. i. 23. We are *born of the incorruptible ſeed;* this is the
Ch. ii. 3. ſame thing with our *taſting that the Lord is gracious.* It is a phraſe that we often meet with in the book of Pſalms, *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good!* and it is too much to be affirmed of a creature; no finite being is capable of giving us ſuch an experience. Now, what Lord is that whom we have *taſted to be gracious,* and to whom we muſt be ſtill *coming as to a living ſtone?* who is this that

our

our faith is held to as its object where it fixes, as its fountain where it feeds? who, besides the Supreme Being, can give us the first experience of religion, and call us to a continual dependence upon Him? It is too much for any but himself to do it. And yet this Lord, this living stone, can be no other than our Saviour: for he is described afterwards by his lower character, as *disallowed of men*; *but chosen of God, and precious.* From him we have derived the first life, from him we must derive the rest; by him we are *living stones, and are built up a spiritual house.* SERM. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 4. Ver. 5.

Our graces are his work, and what does that import but an Almighty arm? David ascribes it to no less a power than what made the world; *Create in me a clean heart, O God:* They that have this change are *born of God.* Who must He be that shall make a *people willing in the day of his power?* He gave Paul his commission; he sent him *to turn the Gentiles from darkness to light:* And yet none but that *God* who *caused light to shine out of darkness* can *shine into their hearts.* He saith to his disciples, *My peace I give unto you, not as the world gives give I unto you.* And what was this but Omnipotence, a *creating the fruit of the lips, peace, peace,* a sending out his Word, and healing them? Psal. li. 10. John i. 13. Psal. cx. 3. Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 6. John xiv. 27. Isa. lvii. 19.

9. God has manifested himself as the great Example and Pattern of all our holiness. Religion is a likeness to Him. This was his command to the Jews, *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* He would never direct our thoughts in those unlimited terms, to any but himself. *He that does the truth, comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in* God. And therefore, 1 Pet. i. 16. Joh. iii. 21.

If we find that Christ is proposed as our pattern, in language that only belongs to an infinite Being, we shall see that it is in maintenance of his character. It is true, his obedience to the law *under which he was made,* is the proper example that he has left

SERM. 13. behind him for us to follow his ſteps. We are to
Eph. v. 1. be *followers of him as dear children*, and to *walk in*
1 John iv. *love, as he has loved us*; and that gives us *boldneſs*
17. *in the day of Judgment, that as he was, ſo we are*
in this preſent world.

But, beſides this, our faith regards him as a Pattern under a more glorious conſideration. Our religion, even in heaven, is a reſemblance of him:
1 John iii. 2. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Like whom? Like the Great God. David would
Pſ. xvii. 15. not uſe the language about any other: *As for me, I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs; when I awake, I ſhall be ſatisfied with* THY *likeneſs.* And again,
— xxxvi. 9. *With Thee is the fountain of life, and in* THY *light we ſhall ſee light.* Nor does the Apoſtle ſpeak of
1 John iii. 1. any lower perſon, when he ſaith, *What manner of love has the Father beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of* GOD? though without any va-
ver. 2. riation of the phraſe he goes on to tell us, *Therefore the world knows us not, becauſe it knew not* HIM. It knew not *that* God, whoſe ſons we are. *Beloved, now we are the ſons of God; and when* HE, to whom we are thus related, *ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* What does he ſay leſs, than that we ſhall behold his face in righteouſneſs, and be ſatisfied with his likeneſs? If one of theſe verſes contains as much as the other, it means as much. If the words run as high, certainly the ſenſe muſt do ſo too. Nay, from theſe
—3. offices of our faith, he goes on to tell us, that *he who has this hope in him, purifies himſelf, even as* HE *is pure.*

Is any but a God to be ſuch a Rule and Pattern of our religion? Are not theſe words too much for a creature, *Be ye holy, for I am holy?* Yes ſurely:
1 Sam. ii. 2. Hannah's obſervation is eternally true; *There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beſides him.*
Mat. xix. 17. Our Saviour ſaith, *There is none good but One, that*
Acts. iii. 14. *is God;* and yet He himſelf is called *the Holy One.*

Imitation

Imitation is one great act of reverence; and therefore when any example below a God is ſet before us, it is always under qualifications: *Be ye followers of me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *even as I alſo am of Chriſt.* But abſolute, unreſerved conformity, is only to him that made us. Thus we expreſs our homage, as well as our affection, in a way that we dare not uſe to an Angel. *If any man ſerve* ME, ſaith Chriſt, *let him follow* ME. SERM. 13. 1 Cor. xi. 1. John xii. 26.

10. Another manifeſtation that we have of God is, as he is the Author and Giver of thoſe joys that are laid up for us in another world. There can be no happineſs but what comes from him: *Thou wilt guide me by thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to* THY *glory.* THOU *wilt ſhew me the path of life*, as if life were nowhere elſe; *in* THY *preſence there is fulneſs of joy, and at thy right-hand are pleaſures for evermore.* This made him ſay, *Whom have I in heaven but* THEE? He hoped to meet there with *an innumerable company of Angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, to ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob; but none of theſe could make him bleſſed. He only regarded his God under that character: *Thou art my portion for ever. The Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul.* And indeed, upon this head, human reaſon agrees with the light of the Goſpel, that no leſs than an Infinite Nature can ſatisfy either the neceſſity or the deſires of a ſoul. And therefore whoever repreſents himſelf as the Author of every good and perfect gift, muſt be either *the Father of lights*, or an impoſtor. Pſal. lxxiii. 24. —xvi. 11. Heb. xii. 22, 23. Pſal. lxxiii. 26. Lam. iii. 24. Jam. i. 17.

Here the queſtion is, Whether under this notion our thoughts are not called up to a Mediator. He did not only appear *to aboliſh death*, but *to bring life and immortality to light*; He made heaven better known than ever it was before: But, beſides that, it is his gift as well as his diſcovery. Our happineſs is a *being with Chriſt;* that is, *being ever with the Lord: He that ſits upon the throne ſhall dwell among* 2 Tim. i. 10. Phil. i. 23. 1 Theſ. iv. 17. Rev. vii. 15.

SERM. 15. *mong them.* Upon this authority he ſpeaks: *They are my ſheep, and they ſhall never periſh; but I give to them eternal life, and no man ſhall pluck them out* Joh. x. 28, 29. *of* MY *hand.* He adds as a farther ſecurity, *My Father who gave them to me is greater than all, and none ſhall pluck them out of my Father's hand.* If he was to be conſidered only in his human nature, what he here ſaith would be no argument. For though the Father that gave them to him was greater than all, yet if himſelf was not ſo too they might be loſt; for it was *His own hand* that held them. Their protection is not taken from the greatneſs of the giver, but from the greatneſs of the keeper. And therefore, in aſſerting that none ſhall pluck them out of *his hand*, he goes upon the ground ver. 30. that is mentioned in the very next words, *I and my Father are one.*

Does it only mean one in deſign, in conſent and agreement? that is no more than may be affirmed of any Saint or Angel in heaven. Every inhabitant there may ſay, that God and he are one; what God ſaith he approves. But ſuch an oneneſs is no argument that thoſe creatures can hold faſt whatever the Father has given them. The words under this interpretation may be applied to Adam. God and he were one, when he was firſt put into paradiſe; there was a full harmony between them. He had a principle of grace and holineſs; the Father that gave him theſe was greater than all; but yet he could not ſay, that none was able to pluck them out of his hands; for they were plucked out. Now, if Chriſt's being one with the Father, does include an ability *in himſelf* to keep what is given him, it muſt be upon the ſame foundation, that He (as well as the Father) *is greater than all;* for otherwiſe what he here ſaith could not be true. Without this he hath no power, no right to give eternal life.

Conſider

Conſider him in our nature, and this is what he never aſſumed. When the two ſons of Zebedee came with their mother, begging that the one of them might ſit at his right-hand, and the other at his left in his kingdom, he tells them it was not his to give, but *it ſhould be given to them for whom it was prepared of his Father.* So that you ſee he diſdains even the power of granting preferments upon earth; as man, he did not pretend to this; and therefore, if He that ſaith, *this is not mine to give*, talks in another place of giving what is infinitely greater, he muſt be conſidered as bearing two natures. He that would not venture to fix a precedence among his people, would never have dared to ſay, *they ſhall not periſh*, if he was not one with the Father, in the greateſt ſenſe that the word can bear. SERM. 13.

It is *the righteous judgment of* GOD *that renders to every man according to his deeds:* And yet, *He that comes quickly has his reward with him, to give every man according as his work ſhall be;* and who is this, but *he that teſtified of thoſe things.* You have the ſenſe of the Church upon that head: *Amen, even ſo come* LORD JESUS. It is plain thus the Jews underſtood him, and therefore would have ſtoned him for blaſphemy, *Becauſe*, ſay they, *thou being a man, makeſt thyſelf God.* If he meant no more by theſe words, *I and my Father are One*, than what a modern interpretation amounts to, he might eaſily have pleaded not guilty. But he rather heightens the provocation, by repeating his pretenſions: *Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, ſay ye of Him whom the Father has ſanctified and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt,—becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?* Rom. ii. 5, 6. Rev. xxii. 12. 20. John x. 33. —— 34, 35. 36.

He here fixes the great diſtinction betwixt himſelf and the whole world, that they were people *to whom the word of God came:* He was the only perſon

SERM. 13. perſon that brought it. *Sanctifying and ſending him into the world*, are titles that may be underſtood in a lower ſenſe of all the Prophets; but it is plain he uſes them here in a way that is peculiar to himſelf; therefore he tells them that he does not call himſelf God in the way that he has called men ſo. Not by virtue of an office; no office could make him the Son of God: This title by which he was to be known, ſignified more than ever belonged to them whom he had called *gods*. What then does
John x. 37. he put it upon? *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* What are thoſe? The works that his Father commanded: *That* any good man or Prophet might have ſaid; but it is evident, he ſpeaks of thoſe works which none but the Father himſelf could do; and from hence he concludes a great deal more than a Divine aſſiſtance, which God had given to his ſervants in all ages. And
—— 38. upon this ground he aſſerts a perſonal union, *Though ye believe not me, i. e.* not my teſtimony, *yet believe the works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* In me, not as he was in the Prophets, and thoſe that uſed to ſurpriſe the world with miracles.

And it is plain, the Jews perceived that he ſpoke of ſomething more than a derived help from the Father, for that they would never have denied him. *They knew he was a teacher come from God; for no man could do the works that he did, except God was with him*: But they took his words to ſignify an equality with God; and therefore after all the ex-
—— 39. plications he gave of them, it is obſerved *they ſought again to take him.* And this was the only
John v. 18. provocation, as it had been before: *They ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he ſaid that God was his Father, making himſelf equal with God:* And this
—— xix. 7. they pleaded afterwards, *We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.*

It

It is thus that he ſpeaks to his own Diſciples, SERM. 13.
Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me, with an equal Joh. xiv. 1.
faith, the ſame in kind and in degree: *I go to pre-* ——2, 3.
pare a place for you, and I will come again, and receive you to myſelf. The fitting up a happineſs for us, and taking us into it, were never underſtood to be any other than the works of a God: *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy counſel, and receive me to thy glory: Whom have I in heaven but Thee?* And on purpoſe to eſtabliſh them in this opinion, he adds, a little while afterward, *No man comes unto the Father, but* ver. 6.
by me; but to let them ſee that he who brings them to the Father is equal to the Father, he delivers himſelf in ſuch words as muſt either bear this ſenſe, or we ſhall charge him with quibbling, *If ye had known me, you ſhould have known my Fa-* —— 7.
ther alſo; henceforth ye have known him, and ſeen him. They did not underſtand it of ſeeing him in his works, but took it for a perſonal diſcovery which they imagined had never been given: Therefore ſaith Philip, *Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us.* —— 8, 9.
Jeſus ſaith to him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and haſt thou not known me, Philip? Yes, he knew him; but what is that to the purpoſe? Well, *He that has ſeen me, has ſeen the Father.* Certainly in another ſenſe than we may be ſaid to ſee him in the wonders that his ſervants have wrought: The reaſon he repeats is, *Believeſt thou not that I am in* —— 10.
the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf, but the Father who is in me does the works.

SER-

Oct. 12. 1718.

SERMON XIV.

SERM. 14. III. WE are now to conſider that particular MANIFESTATION of God which the text has led us to, and this is ſaid to be IN THE FLESH. Religion is nothing elſe but the diſcovery that God has made of himſelf, a Revelation that is given out from him. Take religion as a Doctrine, and it is this Revelation expoſed; take it as a Principle, and it is this Revelation implanted, filling the
Gal. i. 16. mind, poſſeſſing the will, and moving the affections; take it as a Practice, and it is this Revelation drawn
Joh. xvii. 3. out and returned in duty and love. *It is life eternal to know the only true God.* The ways that he has taken to open out himſelf, and be known to
Heb. i. 1, 2. the world, are very different. *He has at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpoken in times paſt to our fathers by the Prophets,* and *in theſe laſt days has ſpoken to us by his Son.* I will juſt mention the moſt remarkable of them as an introduction to the happy diſcloſure that you have in my text; and in theſe you will ſee, how the Revelation of a God has been as the light of the morning, ſhining more and more, till it came to a perfect day.

1. He has manifeſted himſelf in voices: He
Gen. iii. 8. uſed to ſpeak out to the world. *Adam and his wife heard the voice of the Lord God in the midſt of the garden:* Thus he dealt both with good and bad.

You find him arguing with Cain, as well as *te-*
Heb. xi. 4. *ſtifying to the gifts of Abel.* This way expired by degrees: And then

Job xxxiii. 15, 16. 2. He manifeſted himſelf by *dreams and viſions of the night, when deep ſleep falls upon men, and ſlumbrings*

ſlumbrings upon the bed; then *he opens the ears of men, and ſeals their inſtruction.* This was alſo without any diſtinction betwixt his people and his enemies. Thus *he came to Abimelech in a dream by night.* In like manner he *met Laban the Syrian,* and conveyed into his heart an awful charge, not to ſpeak to Jacob either good or bad: *He rebuked him in the night.* Thus he inſtructed Pharaoh, and terrified Nebuchadnezzar. For *there is a God in heaven who reveals ſecrets, and makes known what ſhall be in the latter days.* SERM. 14. Gen. xx. 3. —xxxi. 24. ver. 42. Dan. ii. 28.

3. He uſed to manifeſt himſelf by raiſing up eminent perſons, either as *Prophets* to teach his people, or as *ſaviours* to defend them. The Revelation was then contracted, not given to mankind in general, but made known to thoſe whom he had choſen. He took this way to bring the children of Iſrael out of Egypt, by appointing Moſes to be *the ſhepherd of his flock, and putting his Spirit within him.* And as it was the encouragement that he gave to Moſes himſelf, *I have known thee by name, and thou haſt found grace in my ſight;* ſo he brings it in for his vindication againſt the envy of Aaron and Miriam. If *there be a Prophet among you, I will make myſelf known to him in a viſion, and ſpeak to him in a dream: My ſervant Moſes is not ſo, who is faithful in all my houſe; with him will I ſpeak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark ſpeeches, and the ſimilitude of the Lord ſhall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to ſpeak againſt my ſervant Moſes?* From hence you ſee, that what had been the general experience of mankind, came to be more reſtrained. It belonged to an office, and was not given in common as it uſed to be. And therefore it is obſerved, that *there aroſe not a Prophet ſince in Iſrael, like unto Moſes, whom the Lord knew face to face. Of old time, holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* Iſa. lxiii. 11. Num. xii. 6, 7, 8.

SERM. 14.

4. He manifeſted himſelf in miracles. This was for the conviction of the world. As Moſes ſaith, *Hereby ye ſhall know that the Lord has ſent me to do all theſe works, and that I have not done them of my own mind.* He ſuſpected the incredulity of the people before he took his commiſſion, *They will not believe my voice, for they will ſay, The Lord has not appeared unto thee.* And therefore God ordered him to caſt down his rod, which became a ſerpent, and do it a ſecond time, which reſtored it into a rod, *that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared unto thee.* And it is obſerved, that when Aaron ſpake the words to the people, Moſes did the ſigns in their ſight; *and the people believed, and bowed down their heads and worſhipped.* Thus *he ſhewed his people the power of his works, that he might give them the heritage of the heathen.*

5. He manifeſted himſelf in a written law. One part of it was written with *the finger of God* upon two tables of ſtone, but theſe were broken, when the people for whom they were deſigned had wandered into a ſuperſtition of their own. After that, *Moſes commanded them a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.* This he did according to the pattern ſhewed him in the mount, for Heb. iii. 2. *he was faithful in all things to him who had appointed him.* Thus the Prophets, whom he raiſed up afterwards, were directed and filled; that which 1 Pet. i. 11. they regarded was *the Spirit of Chriſt that was in them*, and the teſtimony that this gave to our ſal- 2 Tim. iii. 16. vation. *All Scripture was given by inſpiration of God.*

6. He manifeſted himſelf by ſeveral ordinances. He gave them ſtatutes and judgments by which Pſal. xlviii. 3. they were to live. He was *known in their palaces for a refuge.* They went up to the place that he —cxxii. 4. had choſen, to *the teſtimony of Iſrael.*

7. He

7. He alſo manifeſted himſelf by appearing frequently to them. *The Angel of his preſence ſaved them.* And this he did at any remarkable turn of life, when the concerns of his glory and their happineſs made it needful. Thus we read, that the *Lord went his way, as ſoon as he had left communing with Abraham.* Jacob takes notice that *God Almighty appeared to him at Luz, in the land of Canaan:* This was at a time that might be called the dead of night, the gloomy part of life, when he left his father's houſe, becauſe of his brother's anger. After this, upon his return, *he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: He found him in Bethel.* So again, when the famine had ſtarved him out of Canaan, the country that was promiſed to him and his ſeed after him, at Beerſheba, the confines of the land, *God ſpake to Iſrael in the viſions of the night:* He ſent an Angel to fetch them out of Egypt: He guided them in the way, and was an adverſary to their adverſaries. This was no other than *He who rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth*, and by that gave out ſome ſketches of the future incarnation: It was the dawn of our more glorious day. This *Angel of the covenant whom they delighted in*, was in the laſt days to *come to his Temple*, and therefore diſcovered himſelf to them before-hand, that *the twelve Tribes, inſtantly ſerving God day and night*, might ſtill keep looking on, to *the great Hope of Iſrael.*

SERM. 14.
Iſa. lxiii. 9.
Gen. xviii. 33. —xlviii. 3.
Hoſ. xii. 4.
Gen. xlvi. 2.
Prov. viii. 31.
Mal. iii. 1.
Acts xxvi. 7.

8. The laſt and greateſt manifeſtation that we have of God is IN THE FLESH. What that body was by which he became viſible, and made his appearance ſo often in the Old Teſtament, is a thing undeſcribed; and therefore to gueſs at it, is only to wander in the mazes of our own folly. It is certain, this way of coming in the fleſh exceeds all the reſt; it anſwers nobler ends, is better for us, and kinder in him. Theſe *ſundry times and divers manners*

SERM. 14 *manners* in which he ſpake to the fathers, make ſo many glorious parts in hiſtory; but his ſpeaking to us in theſe laſt days *by his Son*, is diſtinguiſhed from all that went before. The way of doing *that*, was more ſuitable to our happineſs and his own dignity, upon ſeveral accounts. It is more familiar, and leſs frightful; more certain and convincing; more expreſſive of our union to him; more capable of working out the great atonement; more inſtructive in the matter of duty; it gives a greater aſſurance of our happineſs; and in the whole, is a nobler argument of the Divine love.

1. His being manifeſt in the fleſh, exceeds all the other manifeſtations that he gave of himſelf, as it is more familiar. *Rejoice greatly*, ſaith the Prophet, *O daughter of Zion; ſhout, O daughter of Jeruſalem; behold thy King comes unto thee; he is juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, and riding upon an aſs.* Whatever we may think of voices and thunders, and a doctrine diſcharged in the artillery of heaven, the people who were under that diſpenſation did not like it. At the giving of the law, the Angels attended in their places, and were diſtributed into their ſeveral offices: Some managed the thunder, others ſhook the mountain; ſome gave the ſmoke, and others the voice. Now, though theſe were a noble teſtimony to the law itſelf, and an argument for the people to hear and fear, yet the terror it put them into was by no means deſirable. They come to Moſes, and beg that he would go into the mount, that they might hear no more of theſe mighty thunderings. Nay, ſo dreadful was the ſight, that *Moſes himſelf ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.* And if *he* could not bear it, who had ſeen the Lord, and was prepared for a correſpondence with all that glory, well might it ſcatter a confuſion among the children of Iſrael.

Zech. ix. 9.

Heb. xii. 21.

Thus was God manifeſt then, and they might take it for *a humbling of himſelf*, to behold the things

things that were done among them; but we have his love in a more familiar way, in that he would *ſend forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law.* Gal. iv. 4. *The Word was made fleſh and dwelt among us.* John i. 14. *We are not come to the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which they that heard intreated that the word ſhould no more be ſpoken to them;* Heb. xii. 18, 19. but to *Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, whoſe voice then ſhook the earth.* ver. 24. 26.

SERM. 14.

And if it was not a God who came into that tabernacle of fleſh, and took our nature into union with himſelf, we cannot regard it with ſo much veneration as we muſt have done thoſe thunders and voices that publiſhed the Horeb edition of the law. He was certainly at mount *Sinai among his thouſands of Angels*, and is it not the ſame God who took upon him our nature? if not, we are no gainers by this diſpenſation. What was there in Him more than a Prophet? His working great miracles, giving a better account of religion, is not all, for that any other perſon might have done; nay, in each of theſe his own Diſciples exceeded him, as he foretold they ſhould: *He that believes on me ſhall do greater things than I do, becauſe I go to my Father.* John xiv. 12. From them the world has a more complete edition of the Goſpel than they had from him: He left many things unſaid, but the Spirit whom he would ſend ſhould *lead them into all truth.* John xvi. 13. And therefore, what was there in him, more than in them? you can put it upon no leſs than the greatneſs of his Perſon. The law was given *by the diſpoſition of Angels*, being *ordained by Angels in the hands of a mediator*, that is, Moſes. Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. Our Goſpel comes with none of this ſolemnity, but with quiet preaching, *the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths ſtraight.* Luke iii. 4.

Pſ. lxviii. 17.

SERM. 14. *ſtraight.* Thus it began with the miniſtry of John the Baptiſt, or rather *that* was preliminary to it;
Heb. ii. 2, 3. *for this great ſalvation began to be ſpoken by the Lord Jeſus, and was confirmed by thoſe that heard him.*

Now, where was the force of the Apoſtle's argument, *If the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a recompenſe of reward; how ſhall we eſcape who neglect the great ſalvation that began to be ſpoken by the Lord Jeſus?* It is apparent, he conſiders Jeſus as a much greater ſpeaker than the Angels; and it is certain nothing of that could be ſeen in his converſation, for he was much *lower than the Angels.* They who believed not, were far from taking him for one above them, or giving the preference to his words more than to what was ſaid by an Angel: ſo that, if there is any concluſion at all in his argument, it muſt be drawn from an *unſeen glory* in the ſpeaker, ſomething that was not known to them that deſpiſed him, and only evident to thoſe whoſe
John i. 10. eyes God had opened; and ſo it proved: *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, but the world knew him not, i. e.* they knew him not as their Maker. In other reſpects they were no ſtrangers to him: They knew him to be of Nazareth, of a poor parentage, of a mean kindred; but they knew him not in his main character. Our Saviour
John vii. 27, 28, 29. obſerves both theſe; for his enemies argued, *We know this man whence he is; but when Chriſt comes, no man knows whence he is;* to which he anſwers, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; but he that ſent me is true, whom ye know not; but I know him, for I am from him. He came to his own, and his own received him not, i. e.* the Jews. They marvelled at his words, were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine; they admired his miracles; but this was not receiving him: That contained a great deal more than believing him to be a good man, a Prophet mighty in

in word and deed. Now, *to them that received him, he gave power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe*, on what? *on his Name*: Though their faith might be led on by his doctrine, and by his miracles, (never man ſpake like this man,—he did the works that no other could do), yet it fixed on his unſeen character. SERM. 14.

They believed *on his Name*, what he was in himſelf. And what is that? *The* WORD *was made fleſh, and dwelt among us.* Others might know *that* as well as they, they ſaw him to be fleſh, and they knew his abode, but they were ignorant of the antecedent majeſty; and therefore thoſe believers were enabled to look through: *We beheld his glory (the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.* Thoſe laſt words belong to the firſt, and may be conſidered apart from the parentheſis that breaks the ſentence. He tells us that this WORD *dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.* The character fixes upon him as Mediator: With that furniture he was an inhabitant in our world; but this does not tell us *all* that he was: There is ſomething elſe that believers ſaw in him, beſides the holineſs of his Perſon, and the qualifications for his work: They ſaw HIS *glory*, and what was this? *the glory of the only begotten of the Father:* The world had never before ſuch a diſcovery of a God. God had often been *with* a perſon, but not *in* one; and therefore he is called, *the image of the inviſible God;* the moſt familiar manifeſtation that the world can have of him. He is *the brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs image* or character *of his Perſon*: Upon which he ſaith to Philip, *He that has ſeen me, has ſeen the Father.* Joh. i. 12, 14. Heb. i. 3.

How familiar was this, that he ſhould be *Immanuel*, God with us! not merely by a ſpiritual preſence, for that he *was before*, and that he *is* more eminently *now*, but he who was with us is God: This way was the moſt agreeable to our weakneſs.

God's

SERM. 14. God's appearance uſed to be dreadful: Jacob makes
Gen. xxxii. 30. a wonder of it, *I have ſeen God face to face, and yet my life is preſerved.* Manoah, as ſoon as he ſaw the Angel of the Lord, (which ſhews what ſort of an Angel he took him for), cries out with all the pain of admiration, *We ſhall ſurely die, becauſe we have ſeen God.* The manifeſtation that he makes of himſelf in the fleſh, is without all this dread:
1 Joh. i. 1, 2. Here *our eyes may ſee, and our hands may handle of the word of life*, as that Apoſtle ſaith who uſed to lie in his boſom: *For*, ſaith he, *the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you* that *eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us.* What he calls *the word of life* in one verſe, he calls by the name of *life* itſelf in the other, which ſhews that they both muſt be underſtood of a perſon; of Him whom they had looked upon, and whom their hands had handled. This eternal life was *with the Father*, as the Author of eternal life, and yet he was *manifeſt to us in the fleſh:* He came into one of our tabernacles, thoſe houſes of clay whoſe foundations are in the duſt, and are cruſhed before the moth.

2. This manifeſtation of God is moſt certain and convincing. Many times they could not tell whether it was God who ſpake to them or no. The Prophets themſelves were frequently obliged to take
Jer. xxxii. 8. up with the after-grounds of aſſurance, *Then I knew it was the word of the Lord.* Elijah ſaw a mighty
Zech. xi. 11. earthquake, but *the Lord was not in the earthquake:*
1 Kings xix. 11. He heard a ſtrong ruſhing wind, *but the Lord was not in the wind:* He expected to have found him
Luke i. 68. in both theſe; but we *are ſure that the Lord God of Iſrael has viſited and redeemed his people,* ἐπεσκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησε λύτρωσιν, He has looked upon them, and wrought out a ſalvation.

What ſort of a body he had for the apparitions under the Old Teſtament, we cannot tell; but now he is *made of a woman.* He did not take upon him

him a ſhadow, an airy covering, a human figure, which he might throw off as a looſer garment, after it had ſerved a particular occaſion; but *he was in all things tempted as we are*, κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, according to the whole of that likeneſs that he had to his people. *Foraſmuch as children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he likewiſe himſelf*, παραπλησίως, univerſally, entirely, was a ſharer with them; *for it became him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.* SERM. 14. Heb. iv. 15. — ii. 14. 17.

The primitive churches were guilty of an error upon this head, againſt which the Apoſtles argued with a particular vehemence: His Divinity was not then the main queſtion, ſo much as the truth of his humanity. That he who came about their ſalvation is *the Mighty God* was eaſily believed, becauſe it is only under thoſe notions that we conceive him equal to the deſign. But the difficulty lay in this, that an infinite nature ſhould take a finite one, that he ſhould be *a child*, live as we did, and die as we ſhall: This was the great ſtumbling-block; and therefore he is called *an Antichriſt, who denied that Chriſt was come in* THE FLESH. Not but that they would own that he had been among them, there were witneſſes enough of that; but they thought he could not have the reality and truth of our nature; in oppoſition to which thoſe expreſſions were uſed, *We have looked upon, and our hands have handled the word of life.* There is no handling of a God, or ſeeing Him who *dwells in that light to which none can approach.* As the Word of Life, he could not be the ſubject of ſuch a converſation; but the meaning is, that He who bore this Divine character came down into a lower, and ſo *dwelt among us.*

This is not like thoſe tranſient viſions under the Old Teſtament. When the Angel came the ſecond time upon Manoah's prayer, and had given him inſtructions what he ſhould do to the child, and at

SERM. 14 laſt went up in the flame, it is ſaid, that *the Angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and his wife.* He had done with that meſſage. Theſe *haſty revelations* that were carried on in a way of *flight*, left the people at great uncertainties; but now it
Acts i. 21. is obſerved of the Lord Jeſus, that *he went in and out amongſt us.*

Joh. vi. 69. They might well ſay, *We believe, and are* SURE, *that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God.* And to this profeſſion our Lord himſelf gives his
——xvii. 8. teſtimony, *I have given unto them the words that thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and have known* SURELY *that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou haſt ſent me.* Indeed this is what themſelves had told him a little before,
——xvi. 30. *Now we are* SURE *that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould aſk thee; by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.* In what ſenſe? as a good man, as a mighty Prophet? No, but as the One that had an exiſtence with God, and the exiſtence of a God, as one that *knew all things.* Now, why ſhould they ſay that of him, when he had expreſsly told them, that there was an hour that none of the Angels knew, no not the Son, but the Father? He plainly confeſſes a nature that was *not* omniſcient, and therefore if they did not believe that he had *another* that *was*, they would never have been ſo looſe and extravagant in their zeal as to tell him, that *he knew all things.*

3. This manifeſtation in the fleſh, is moſt expreſſive of our union to him. We may call him
Pſal. lxviii. 20. *our God*, as he is the Author of *ſalvation*, and as he gives us the deſires that are breathing after it, and all the preparations that relate unto it; but that he might abundantly ſhew us *how much* he is ours, he is *bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh;* he becomes *the ſeed of the woman.* It was not enough that he all along deſigned to condemn ſin, but he
Rom. viii. 3. does it *in the fleſh;* ſo that by this means, he has all

all the names that ſignify the deareſt relations. He is *our Lord and Maſter;* we call him ſo, and we ſay well. We are *under the law to Chriſt.* He is our Friend, our Shepherd, he lays down his life for the ſheep. He is our Father. *His goings forth have been of old from everlaſting. Here am I,* ſaith he, *and the children whom he has given me.* But on purpoſe to ſhew us this union in all the happy forms that can be, he becomes alſo our Brother, *the firſt-born among many brethren.* As the ground of an union with him in covenant, he admits us to one in nature. He did this on purpoſe to be the foundation of our hope in that promiſe, *I in them, and thou in me.* He became the Son of man, that we might be the children of God.

SERM. 14.
John. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. ix. 21. Mic. v. 2. Heb. ii. 13. Rom. viii. 29.

4. This manifeſtation in the fleſh, was for the working out of a great atonement. The Apoſtle gives that as the reaſon, why it *behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt in things pertaining to God, making reconciliation for the ſins of the people.* This uſed to be carried on in a way that could have no other value, than as it was typical of ſomething better than itſelf; I mean, by ſacrifices and burnt-offerings: For though he told us, *that without ſhedding of blood there could be no remiſſion,* yet it was *impoſſible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away ſins.*

Heb. ii. 17. —ix. 22. —x. 4.

Now, in order to anſwer what *this* could only point to, there muſt be an incarnation. Satisfaction was the τὸ ἀδύνατον τῷ νόμῳ, *the thing that the law could not do,* and this God brings about by *ſending his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.* Sending him in thoſe ſlighter and thinner forms under the Old Teſtament would be ſufficient for an inſtruction to his people, and for a reſcue from their enemies. This would do for *a captain of the Lord's hoſt,* as he calls himſelf to Joſhua, but it could not avail to a *propitiation;* there muſt be the ſhedding of

Rom. viii. 3. Joſh. v. 15.

SERM. 14. of blood for that; and therefore, ſaith he, *when*
Heb. x. 5. *ſacrifice and offering thou wouldſt have no longer, a body thou haſt prepared me.* That opinion of the ancients, which the Apoſtle John run down with ſo much warmth, that Chriſt was *not come in the fleſh*, ought to be reſiſted in all the vehemence that he uſed, becauſe it deſtroyed the foundations. If he was not man, he could not die; and if he did not die, there was no atonement made, we are *yet in our ſins.* If there was none of this precious blood, we are ſtill unredeemed; and though he is
Joh. i. 29. *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, he is not that *Lamb of God who takes away the ſins of the world.*

5. By this manifeſtation in the fleſh, he gave the beſt inſtructions in the matter of our duty. Had he never revealed himſelf otherwiſe than in the more glorious forms that were uſed of old, we ſhould have admired his Perſon, but not underſtood ſo much of his errand: He was therefore to teach us *after the manner of men*, to bear the weakneſs and prejudice of his Diſciples, and to anſwer their objections. Job complained that every admonition from God loſt its uſefulneſs by its majeſty, and therefore thinks he could have learned better, if the terror of the Lord had not made him afraid: *Let not his fear terrify me, then would I*
Job xxiii. 15, 16. *ſpeak, and not fear him; but it is not ſo with me: I am troubled at his preſence, when I conſider, I am afraid of him; for God makes my heart ſoft, and the Almighty troubles me:* and therefore Elihu tells
——xxxiii. 6, 7. him, *Behold, I am according to thy wiſh, in God's ſtead: I am formed out of the clay: Behold, my terror ſhall not make thee afraid, neither ſhall my hand be heavy upon thee.*

This expreſſion of his ſhews us what ſort of a diſpenſation would be beſt, where we could have God's wiſdom delivered without his majeſty, as we
Col. ii. 9. have from one *in whom dwells all the fulneſs of the*
Job xix. 25. *Godhead bodily.* Job knew *that his Redeemer ſhould ſtand*

ſtand in the latter days upon the earth: He ſhall ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord, and in the majeſty of the name of the Lord his God. The man that is to be the peace ſhall do this: He was to *feed his flock like a ſhepherd, carry the lambs in his arm, take them in his boſom, and gently lead thoſe that are with young.* The manifeſtation of a God in the fleſh, gives the eaſieſt conveyance to all inſtructions. When he revealed himſelf in that cloud of thick darkneſs by which he took poſſeſſion of Solomon's temple, the Prieſts could not enter in to miniſter becauſe of the ſtifling glory. Though they admired ſo great a token of the Divine preſence, yet it rather kept them out of his ſervice than helped them in it: But when God came down among us in the perſon of a Redeemer, religion was both greater *to* our minds, and ſooner *in* them. *I manifeſted unto them thy name, and I have given unto them the words that thou gaveſt me, and they have received them.* SERM. 14. Mic. v. 4, 5. Iſa. xl. 11. John xvii. 6. 8.

6. This gives us the greateſt aſſurance of our happineſs, becauſe he has carried his body up with him to heaven: *Thither Jeſus our forerunner is for us entered.* When, and how did he enter? In the day of his crucifixion? for that day he was with the converted thief in paradiſe: or as one that took poſſeſſion for himſelf? No, but *as a High Prieſt for ever,* with all the materials of a ſacrifice about him: *By his own blood he entered into the holieſt of all, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* We therefore the rather look for Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and know that he will *change our vile bodies,* becauſe he has now ſuch a *glorious body,* and is *able by a mighty power to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* Heb. vi. 20. —— ix. 12. Phil. iii. 21.

7. This ſhews the goodneſs of God our Saviour towards men. Herein has *God commended his love towards us,* in ſending his only begotten Son into the world, *that whoever believes in him ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.* This might well be John iii. 16.

called

SERM. 14. called *glad tidings of great joy to all people, that to*
Luke ii. 10, 11. *us is born in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.* Let the redeemed of the Lord say so; let them take a part in the songs of those
ver. 14. Angels who brought the message, and say, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.*

SERMON XV.

Oct. 26. 1718.

IV. THE last thing I am to do, according to the disposition that we have made of the words, is to shew you how this branch of the Christian religion answers the noble character that is here given of it, as a *Mystery of Godliness.* Under this head there are two parts.

1*st*, That it is a Mystery; and,

2*dly*, That it is a Mystery of *Godliness.*

I have already considered each of these, as they belong to the Gospel in general, and let you see the importance of mysteries in our religion, that they are a suitable object of faith, and indeed the
Col. ii. 2. glory of any revelation. *Our hearts are comforted in the riches of the full assurance of understanding, and an acknowledgment of the mystery.* You have also heard how well Christianity is prepared upon this account to form the minds of men, to direct their choice, to help on their duty, and ensure their happiness; and that without a belief of some things, that reason can neither discover nor comprehend, it is impossible that practical holiness should ob-
1 Tim. vi. 3. tain in the world: It is *a doctrine according to godliness.*

lineſs. I ſhall now lay before you thoſe Divine titles as they belong to this particular article of faith, that *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, and let you ſee both that it is a myſtery, and that it is deſigned to promote our duty and conſolation. SERM. 15.

1. I begin with the firſt of theſe, that it is a MYSTERY; and really there is no need to diſpute it. The text is literally true, that *without controverſy great is this myſtery.* This is ſo far from being a part of the queſtion, that it is therefore denied to be a *truth*, becauſe it is a *myſtery*. All the objections formed againſt it are upon this ground: do but bring it down to the management of reaſon, let it be one of thoſe things that man's wiſdom teaches, and we ſhall have no contradiction of ſinners. But as it is among *the deep things of God*, which none but the Holy Ghoſt reveals, it is upon this account that *the natural man receives it not*, neither can he know it, becauſe it is fooliſhneſs to him. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

However, I will lead you through a few particulars that will ſhew, how amazing this contrivance deſerves to be in the eyes of all the Saints. If God was manifeſt in the fleſh, then the following oppoſitions between the two natures were reconciled. And how could men or Angels either imagine the way, or believe the fact, if an all-comprehending Wiſdom had not both contrived and revealed it? He that dwells in a *light* to which none can approach, becomes *viſible* to the world. He who had prepared his throne in the heavens, lives among *men*. He who is above the derivation of any being *from* a *man*, is made of a *woman*. He who is *Lord* of all, takes the form of a *ſervant*. He who is eternally *holy*, appears in the likeneſs of *ſinful* fleſh. He whoſe *kingdom* rules over all, is a man of *ſorrows*, and acquainted with grief! He who is *bleſſed* for ever, becomes a *curſe* for us: And

SERM. 15. And He who is the Prince of *life*, is obedient to the *death* of the croſs.

Theſe ſeveral wonders are contained in the manifeſtation that God made of himſelf in the fleſh: And they are all of that nature, that as our reaſon is never able to find them out, ſo neither ought it ever to have taken them in, if they had not been recommended by a Divine teſtimony. They are every one of them incredible, and to us they appear impoſſible. As none but a God could do them, ſo none but a God can tell them. It is upon his report alone that we received them.

1. Is it not a Myſtery that He *who dwells in that light to which none can approach*, became viſible to us? The former part of this character belongs to Chriſt, as you will ſee by the context to the verſe out of which I have taken it. The A-
1 Tim. vi. 14, 15. poſtle charges Timothy *to keep the commandment without ſpot, and unrebukeable, unto the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, WHO *in his times ſhall ſhew who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.* There is nothing ſaid of him thus far, but what agrees to the known language of the Bible: And he goes on in a deſcription of the very ſame Perſon, that *He only has immortality, dwelling in the light which none can approach unto, whom no man has ſeen, nor can ſee; to whom be glory and power everlaſting*, Amen. It is under this notion that our Lord ſpeaks of the Divine Nature, as that which is known and ſeen
John i. 18. by none but himſelf: *No man has ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the boſom of*
——vi. 46. *the Father, he has declared him.* And again, *Not that any man has ſeen the Father, ſave he that is of God, he has ſeen the Father.* The ſame inacceſſible
Mat. xi. 27. glory does he challenge to himſelf, that *none knows the Father but the Son, and none knows the Son but the Father.*

Now, he was to make the Divine Nature in ſome reſpects converſable with us. Hence we read of him, that *he is the image of God.* This deſcription is elſewhere more enlarged, that he is *the image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every creature.* Thus the Apoſtle ſaith in that text that will ever contain a fulneſs of truth, when all the pains that men take to rob and plunder it ſhall prove in vain, *He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon.* We have *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.* This was the deſign of his incarnation, that God and man ſhould again be known to one another. Moſes begs of God, *I beſeech thee ſhew me thy glory;* and receives this for an anſwer, *Thou canſt not ſee my face; for no man ſhall ſee me and live.* How different is the anſwer that our Lord gives to Philip, who had deſired the ſame thing, *Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us?* Chriſt does not tell him as it was ſaid to Moſes, that he is aſking for a thing impoſſible. No, he repreſents his own Perſon, as a more familiar publication of the Divine Nature than the world ever had before. *If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father, and from henceforth ye have known him, and ſeen him: He that has ſeen me has ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou then, Shew us the Father? Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Who would ever imagine that we ſhould ſee, *and with eyes look upon,* and that *our hands ſhould handle the word of life! For the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs and ſhew unto you,* that *eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſt to us.*

SERM. 15.
2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15.
Heb. i. 3.
2 Cor. iv. 6.
Ex. xxxiii. 18.
ver. 20.
John xiv. 8.
— 7. 9, 10.
1 John i. 1, 2.

Moſes tells the children of Iſrael, that there was ſomething in their caſe which exceeded all the obſervation of the univerſe: *Aſk now of the days that are paſt, which were before thee, ſince the day that God created man upon earth, and aſk from one*

Deut. iv. 32, 33.

SERM. 15. *ſide of heaven unto the other, whether there has been any ſuch thing as this great thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God ſpeaking out of the midſt of the fire, as thou haſt heard, and live?* This he repeats to their farther
Deut. v. 4. aſtoniſhment, *The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire:* And he puts them in mind of the remark that themſelves
ver. 24. made upon this occaſion: *Ye ſaid, Behold the Lord our God has ſhewed us his glory and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the fire; we have ſeen this day that God does talk with man, and he lives.* But all this does not amount to ſo much as an incarnation; that the Word ſhould be made fleſh. It was Chriſt who revealed himſelf to the Jews of old; He was the Angel of the
Heb. xi. 26. Divine Preſence; it was *the reproach of Chriſt which Moſes eſteemed above all the treaſures of Egypt.* It was he who appeared at Horeb in a flame of fire, out of the midſt of the buſh; but then he was not to be approached to: The Lord called
Exod. iii. 5. unto Moſes, *Draw not nigh hither, but put off thy ſhoes from thy feet.* As the Angel that went before them, he placed himſelf within a cloud, from which they were to keep their diſtance: But when
John i. 14. the Word was made fleſh, they *beheld his glory.* And what a wonder is it, that He who would not be known any otherwiſe than in theſe imperfect revelations, ſhould be *manifeſt in the fleſh!*

2. Another thing myſterious in this doctrine is, that He who has *prepared his throne in the heavens* ſhould dwell among men. The Word was made fleſh, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, and had a tabernacle among us; he was not only our brother, but our neighbour, *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.* To prepare a throne in the heavens, is the glory of a God: It is one of the higheſt conceptions we have of him, *That the heaven, even the*
Pſal. cxv. 16. *heaven of heavens, is the Lord's.* Our Saviour takes care

care to repreſent it as His place. Thus, when he ſpeaks of the Father before the foundation of the world, he ſaith of himſelf, *I was with him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.* And as the Evangeliſt tells us, *The Word was with God, and the Word was God; the ſame was in the beginning with God.* He had his own ſeat of government and glory. This he demands upon his return, *Glorify me with the glory that I had with Thee, before the world was. The Son of man aſcended where he was before.* This is what he could never loſe, and therefore ſpeaks of his preſence and greatneſs there as a continued thing, an eternal enjoyment; and if it is not to be underſtood of a nature above what he appeared in, we know not how to make ſenſe of the words: *No man has aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven:* His aſcenſion in our nature was not till ſome years after this; but what he adds in the next words brings its own interpretation along with it, *The Son of man who* is *in heaven.* Was not this enough to confound Nicodemus? If it did not relate to his Divinity, the expreſſion would puzzle us more than the account of the new birth puzzled him: For a perſon who was then with him in a little room, to talk of being *in heaven,* might provoke him to ſay a ſecond time, How can theſe things be?

SERM. 15.
Prov. viii. 30.
John i. 1, 2.
——xvii. 5.
——vi. 62.
Joh. iii. 13.

Now, what a wonder is it, that He who lived in the *high and holy place that is called Eternity,* ſhould *come in and go out among us!* He might have taken our nature in the ſame way that now he keeps it, placed it at once in the city and temple of God, never let it come lower than it is at preſent. He might have made it from the beginning, as it now is, *a glorious Body.* But the aſtoniſhment is, that He ſhould be *in the world* that was *made* by him.

Iſa. lvii. 15.
Acts i. 21.
Phil. iii. 21.
John i. 10.

The

SERM. 15. The Scripture has told us with what amazement the moſt eminent perſons of two religions have delivered themſelves upon this doctrine. The Heathen could never believe it, and therefore lay it down as a principle when they ſpeak of their gods, Dan. ii. 11. that *their dwelling is not with fleſh.* And the Jews themſelves, to whom it was ſo often promiſed, found it hard to be conceived. Solomon had a Divine direction to build a Temple, and about this he had uſed all the pains, and coſt, and care, that the world was capable of ſupplying: And yet when he comes to the ſolemnity of a dedication, he can ſcarce believe what he ought not to doubt of: He flies back with a recoil of wonder, *Will God in very deed dwell on the earth! Behold the heaven, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him; how much leſs this houſe that I have built!*

That which he found it ſo hard to apprehend, becomes the report of our Goſpel. This is the great voice that we have heard out of heaven, ſaying, Rev. xxi. 3. *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf will be with them, and be their* Rom. i. 3. *God:* That Chriſt is made of *the ſeed of David* Luke ii. 11. *according to the fleſh;* nay, that he was *born in the city of David,* that there they ſhould find *a Child.* ver. 15. Well might the ſhepherds ſay, *Come, and let us go to Bethlehem, and ſee this* GREAT THING *that is come to paſs.*

3. Another part of the Myſtery is, that He who has derived no being from a *man* ſhould be born of a *woman.* The Apoſtle argues to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 25. that God *needed not any thing, ſeeing that he gives to us life and breath, and all things.* And we have Col. i. 17. an equal account of Chriſt Jeſus, that *by him all* Heb. i. 3. *things were fixed,* that *he upholds all things by the* John i. 4. *word of his power;* that *in him was life, and* that *life was the light of men.* So that though he took upon him our nature, it was not in ſuch a deſcent

as

as we have. God ſpeaks of it as his own act, the thing that he would diſtinguiſh to the wonder of all ages: *Behold the Lord himſelf ſhall give you a ſign, a Virgin ſhall conceive and bear a Son, and they ſhall call his name* IMMANUEL. This our Saviour mentions as a Divine contrivance; *A body haſt thou prepared me.* And it is amazing that his title, as the Son of God, is given him upon this account as well as thoſe that are greater. As the Angel tells the Virgin Mary, *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; and therefore that holy thing that is born of thee ſhall be called the Son of God.* SERM. 15. Iſa. vii. 14. Heb. x. 5. Luke i. 35.

It is as hard for us to conceive how he ſhould be a man, according to this account, as it is how he ſhould be a God. This is as great a difficulty in the *hiſtory* of the Goſpel, as there can be in its *doctrines*. And therefore when it is ſaid, that to us *a Son is born, to us a Child is given*, the names that he is called by are, *Wonderful, Counſellor, Everlaſting Father, and Mighty God;* and he may be called *Wonderful*, conſidering the manner how he is *born*, and the way in which he is *given*. They that deny his Divinity may, with as much juſtice do the ſame by his Humanity, unleſs that expreſſion comes within the reach of *their* reaſon, which I own will be ever aſtoniſhing to *mine: Now the birth of Jeſus was on this wiſe; When as his mother was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt.* A phraſe never uſed before, ſince the beginning of the world, and never like to be upon any other occaſion. If we muſt have no Myſteries in religion, let us begin with razing out this. If faith is to receive no more than wiſdom can explain, we may ſhut up the New Teſtament as ſoon as we have opened it; for it will be impoſſible to get over an incomprehenſible fact that lies in the very mouth of the ſtory. Iſa. ix. 6. Mat. i. 18.

4. He

SERM. 15.

4. He who was *Lord of all*, takes upon him *the form of a ſervant:* This carries the wonder a little deeper. The Apoſtle took care to let Cornelius know this, and therefore wedges it in at the beginning of his diſcourſe: As ſoon as he had mentioned *peace by Jeſus Chriſt*, he adds, *He is Lord of all.* This he was originally, *His kingdom rules over all.* Thus the wiſe men enquired after him, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews.* So the Angel foretold; *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt; and the Lord God ſhall give him the throne of his father David, and he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.* And leſt ſome people ſhould think this title *The Son of the Higheſt*, is not ground enough for our adoration, you read what Zacharias, the father of John the Baptiſt, ſaith at the circumciſion of his ſon: *Thou child ſhalt be called the Prophet of the Higheſt; for thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.* The Angels are his *Spirits, and his Miniſters are a flame of fire; but to the Son it is ſaid, Thy throne O God is for ever and ever, and a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.* It was revealed a long while ago, that he ſhould be *the Governor among the nations;* that in the days of thoſe kings who were to dwell after one another in the world, *the God of heaven would ſet up a kingdom that ſhould not be deſtroyed.* He is called *Meſſiah the Prince.*

Acts x. 36. Pſal. ciii. 19. Mat. ii. 2. Luke i. 32, 33. ver. 76. Heb. i. 7, 8. Pſal. xxii. 28. Dan. ii. 44. —ix. 25.

But it was not *thus* that he took upon him our nature, not with a dazzle or ſhew of this dignity; but *being found in faſhion as a man, he took upon him the form of a ſervant. He made himſelf of no reputation*, ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, he made himſelf vain and empty. He came with none of that fulneſs that we ſhould have expected, from the mighty things that have been ſaid of him. *He grew up as a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground.* He was *ſubject to his parents*, wrought with them, and is therefore

Phil. ii. 7, 8. Iſa. liii. 2. Luke ii. 51.

therefore called *the Carpenter.* He was afterwards, by way of ſcorn, *a ſervant of rulers, one whom man deſpiſed and nations abhorred;* nay, he was among his own diſciples *as one that ſerves: The Son of man came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter.* He had *not where to lay his head.* The people *miniſtered to him of their ſubſtance. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, how that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.* SERM. 15. Mark vi. 3. Iſa. xlix. 7. Luke ix. 58. —viii. 3. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

5. He who was eternally holy, came in the *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.* The devils gave him this teſtimony, *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.* Thus the Father bare witneſs of him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am always well pleaſed.* He had no part in the defilement of our nature; for *though he was in all points tempted as we are,* yet ſin is excepted. And therefore it is obſerved, that he was *made ſin for us who knew no ſin.* He did no evil, *neither was guile found in his mouth.* Rom. viii. 3. Mat. iii. 17. Heb. iv. 15. 2 Cor. v. 21.

And yet he muſt appear in the likeneſs, the reſemblance, of ſuch a perſon as he was not: And not only be charged by God with the guilt of others, but ſuppoſed by men to have a guilt of his own. His enemies could ſay to the judge, *If he was not an evil doer, we would not have brought him to thee.* The crimes that he was accuſed of were of the blackeſt nature. *Firſt,* They were angry that he was a *Prophet,* in oppoſition to this they called him a *deceiver: We know that God ſpake to Moſes, as for this fellow we know not from whence he is.* *Secondly,* They would not own him as a *Prieſt:* It was brought into his indictment that he ſaid *Deſtroy this temple, and I will build it in three days.* It was ſtill more provoking, *thirdly,* That he made himſelf a *King;* which title they perverted with a downright falſehood, ſaying upon this ſcore, that he forbid to give tribute to Ceſar: And they puſhed this with a confidence that ſhewed them to be impenetrable: Mat xxvii. 63 John ix. 29.

SERM. 15. impenetrable: *If thou let this man go, thou art not*
John xix. 12. *Cæsar's friend; for whoever makes himself a king is an enemy to Cæsar.* But, *fourthly*, The heaviest accusation of all, was charging him with blasphemy. For this they stoned him, because that he being a man, made himself God; that he said, *God was his Father,* THEREBY *making himself equal with God.*

Thus they understood the phrase, and he lets them go on in their notion; another exposition of the word would have been a plea for the person: And they insist upon it, *We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he called himself the Son of God.* Is not here a wonder, that the holy child
Heb. xii. 3. Jesus should give way to all this reproach, and *endure the contradiction of sinners against himself!* But thus it must be, otherwise how could the Scriptures have been fulfilled?

Isa. liii. 3. 6. He whose kingdom rules over all, is *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:* Angels admire him, and yet he is *despised and rejected of men;*
Joh. i. 11. *they hid their faces from him, his own received him not.* And such an usage as this was needful, in order to his bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows, that the *chastisement of our peace might be upon him, and by his stripes we might be healed.* Had
1 Cor. ii. 8. the princes of this world known him, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* Instead of that, they would have *kissed the Son* lest he should
Isa. lii. 15. be angry: *Kings would have shut their mouths at him:* The Jews would have run to him, as the
Luke ii. 32. great hope of their fathers, and *the glory of Israel.*

But his lot was the reverse to these honours:
Acts iii. 13, 14. They *denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go: They denied the holy and just One, and desired a murderer to be granted to them.* His name was grown so scandalous among them, that he becomes the jest of the multitude, who a little before had admired his miracles, and attended

attended his public entry into Jeruſalem. They bantered all his offices; his prophetical, by throwing a cloth over his face, and then ſtriking him with ſcorn, *Prophecy, O Chriſt, who it is that ſmote thee;* his kingly office, by platting a crown of thorns, putting it on his head, and bowing the knee before him, nay, by inſcribing in the capital letters of three languages upon his croſs, *This is Jeſus of Nazareth, King of the Jews;* and his prieſtly office is ſo much their contempt, that they think it *expedient that he ſhould die for the people;* not in the ſenſe that he deſigned, but only as a political ſacrifice. The very thieves that were crucified with him *caſt the ſame in his teeth: He ſaved others, let him ſave himſelf.* Now, he had as much the diſpoſal of his reputation, as he had of his life. As no man could take that away, but he had *power to lay it down, and power to take it again,* ſo he could as eaſily have broke his way through the cloud, and cauſed light to ſhine out of darkneſs. Inſtead of making himſelf of no reputation, he could have put on the other characters, as one *fairer than the ſons of men, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand,* altogether lovely, and *the deſire of all nations.*

SERM. 15.

John x. 18.

Pſ. xlv. 3. Cant. v. 10. 16. Hag. ii. 7.

Now and then he ſcattered a little of his glory among the rebellious, by which he took off the rugged ſurface that the prieſts had laid on. The ſoldiers went to take him, but inſtead of returning with him as their captive, they confeſs themſelves to be his: *Never man ſpake like this man.* As he ſat in a ſynagogue at Galilee, *the eyes* of the whole aſſembly were fixed upon him, *wondring at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.* This account does not ſuppoſe them converts, but only that their better paſſions were touched and ſet a boiling. His brethren were amazed, that when he had ſo much reputation within reach, he had ſo little in poſſeſſion: *Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy diſciples may ſee the works that thou doeſt:*

John vii. 46. Luke iv. 20. 22.

John vii. 3, 4.

SERM. 15. *doeſt: for there is no man that does any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeks to be known openly: if thou do theſe things, ſhew thyſelf to the world.* But this project, inſtead of flowing from their faith, was an argument of their unbelief, as the hiſtorian tells us, for *neither did his brethren believe on him.* And when he went up, *it was not openly, but as it were in ſecret.* What a Myſtery is this, that He who could have commanded the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, without bowing to Satan, ſhould *find no faith in the earth!*

7. It is another Myſtery, that He who is *bleſſed* for ever, ſhould become a *curſe for his people.* Theſe are each of them the language of Scripture, unimproved and undiſguiſed. The Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes between the nature that he appeared in, and that which was principal and antecedent. He
Rom. ix. 5. ſaith, that *of the Jews as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came;* and therefore he muſt be conſidered ſome way or other as abſtracted from this fleſh, as he is in himſelf, and that is *God over all, bleſſed for ever.* Of him we read, that he is *made under the law;* and what is that? The ſame Apoſtle has laid down this maxim without any exception, that *as many as*
Gal. iii. 10. 13. *are under the law, are under the curſe;* and thus *Chriſt was made a curſe for us.* And leſt you ſhould have any doubt about this, he ſhews us, that he became ſo in a ceremonial or a judicial ſenſe, in the language of that law that was peculiar to the Jews, among whom God had ſaid, *Curſed is every one that hangs on a tree.*

He who was daily God's delight, comes to be
Iſa. liii. 6. 10. his abhorrence: *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all: It pleaſed the Father to bruiſe him, and put him to grief:* Not for any vileneſs in his perſon,
1 Pet. iii. 18. or any provocation in his behaviour, but *he ſuffered the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God. For the tranſgreſſion of my people he was ſtricken.*
Rom. iii. 25. God ſet him *forth to be a propitiation for our ſins*

through faith in his blood: And what a Myſtery is this, that *the chaſtiſement of our peace ſhould be upon him!* The Jews cried out, *How can this man give us his fleſh to eat?* It is as ſtrange that it ſhould be a ſacrifice, as that it ſhould be an entertainment, and yet without this there could be no remiſſion. CHRIST *was offered to bear the ſins of many:* He has appeared in theſe laſt days *to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* SERM. 15. John vi. 52. Heb. ix. 28.

You know, this is ſo much a Myſtery, that the rage which men direct againſt the Divinity of our Lord, uſually falls as heavy upon the ſatisfaction that he has made. As if people were reſolved to go through the whole roll of thoſe dreadful characters; that as they have *trodden under foot the Son of God, i. e.* in his perſon; ſo they will *count the blood of the covenant an unholy* or common thing, and *do deſpite to the Spirit of grace.* But take away the Divinity of our Saviour, and we are left to ſeek in our reverence: Take away his atonement, and we are ſtruck off from our only hope. If he does not live for ever, we have no Advocate: And if he did not die for us, we have no plea. It is from the croſs, and the ſacrifice upon it, that we *fill our mouths with arguments. We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way that he has conſecrated for us through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh.* Heb. x. 29. Job xxiii. 4. Heb. x. 19, 20.

8. It is another part of this Myſtery, that the Prince of life ſhould be obedient to *the death of the croſs.* Any other way of ſuffering had been more honourable; but it is mentioned as an extreme of duty, the fartheſt point to which it could go, that he became *obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.* The Apoſtle does not forget this aggravation of his enemies malice, *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree.* And it is brought in as an evidence how powerful a joy was ſet before him, that he *endured the croſs,* Acts v. 30. Heb. xii. 2.

and

SERM. 15. *and deſpiſed the ſhame:* and a ſhame it was in the
Deut. xxi. 23. language of their law, *for he that is hanged is accurſed of God.* Behold and wonder! Might He not ſay as the church does, *See, O Lord, and conſider, for I am become vile!* The Apoſtle, who had uſed it as an argument againſt the Jews, keeps to the
1 Pet. ii. 24. ſame remark: *His own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree.*—All theſe Myſteries are comprehended in God's being manifeſt in the fleſh.

Nov. 9. 1718.

SERMON XVI.

II. THIS is a Myſtery of GODLINESS, and has a happy influence upon all practical religion. People are the better for believing it. Under this head I would deſire your attention to the following particulars: That this doctrine is a great argument for our duty to God; it declares the value we have for his revelation; it is the chief ground of our hope; it is apparently the concern of good men; there are no practical inconveniences attending it; and all muſt own, it is a thing very deſirable, and to be wiſhed for.

1. This doctrine is a great argument of our duty to God. Though he pleads for worſhip from
Pſ. xcv. 6, 7. the title of Creator, *we bow down before the Lord our Maker, becauſe we are the work of his hand, and the ſheep of his paſture;* yet the more
1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. moving perſuaſion is, that *we are not our own, but bought with a price, and* therefore *ſhould glorify God in our bodies and ſpirits, which are God's.*
Heb. ix. 14. The blood of Chriſt, who *through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, ſhall purge*

our

our conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God. The dignity of that Perſon who was manifeſt in the fleſh, gives a value to all his commands: *His name is as ointment poured forth, and therefore do the upright love him.* *This love of Chriſt conſtrains us,* συνέχει ἡμᾶς, we are drawn to it, and by it, as with a compulſive power. SERM. 16. Cant. i. 3. 2 Cor. v. 14.

The light of nature gives only a company of cold and heartleſs admonitions: It makes diſcoveries, but it makes no impreſſions. But *the grace of God,* the doctrine that he has publiſhed, and by which he is revealed as a God, *teaches to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world.* It has been indeed an old objection againſt Chriſtianity, that by ſetting forth one to be a propitiation for our ſins, it took off the care of men about their own duty. This is what the Papiſts revived at the time of the Reformation, That throwing away of merit was the impairing of religion: But that pretence had a ſort of univerſal anſwer, not only from the learning of miniſters, but from the lives of people; their humility, their zeal, their abounding in the work of the Lord, has rolled away the reproach, and been a viſible argument, that the doctrine of free grace is a *doctrine of Godlineſs.* Tit. ii. 11, 12.

2. The belief of God's being manifeſt in the fleſh, is raiſed upon our value for the revelation he has given us; and denying it, carries the moſt dangerous concluſion againſt the beſt diſpenſation that ever a people were under: *He that believes not the record that God has given of his Son, makes God a liar.* We take it for granted, that the moſt heavenly rules of worſhip are contained in the Bible; that this is *given by inſpiration of God,* as he delivered it by thoſe holy men *who were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* 1 John v. 10.

Now, it is only upon the credit of this book, that we receive the things *that man's wiſdom teaches not.* 1 Cor. ii. 13.

SERM. 16. *not.* Had all the writings in the world told us, that the Divine Nature would unite itſelf with the human, the imagination muſt have been wild and daring: It is a thing that we could not receive, but upon the witneſs of God himſelf: And the only reaſon upon which we own it is, becauſe He has ſaid it in whom there is no darkneſs at all. We ſpeak wiſdom among *them that are perfect; howbeit, not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought: But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the wiſdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.*

We find by experience, that the denial of this
2 Tim. iii. 13. doctrine does *eat as a canker: Evil men and ſeducers wax worſe and worſe.* From doubting about one particular article, they go on to deny all myſteries in general: *The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them.* The ground of doing this, is the mighty opinion we have of human reaſon, as if nothing ſhould be admitted that does not bow to that. And it is impoſſible to indulge that notion without bearing very hard upon the revelation that God has given: for if reaſon is the ſupreme judge, a revelation is needleſs; people may do without it.. And thus revelation muſt be degraded, and brought down to ſomething beneath itſelf. If God at any time reveals himſelf, it muſt be about thoſe matters that we could not otherwiſe have known: For if reaſon could have diſcovered them, there had been no need of this new light.

Now, if that is laid down beforehand, that we will receive nothing even from God himſelf, but what we can comprehend, it ſuperſedes all the buſineſs and deſign of a revelation: It is declaring againſt it. If the doctrines of the Bible are to be valued by their conſiſtence with the light of nature,

nature, they might all have been ſpared: The Holy Ghoſt had no need to raiſe up Prophets, and inſpire Apoſtles; becauſe they tell us no more than what we either could have known without them, or if we could not, they are for that reaſon to be rejected; and indeed this conſequence that I am ſpeaking of, is no more than what people make haſte into. The very notion of a book from God runs low; and when once you have got into a contempt of that, farewell religion: For you muſt then conclude, that God has given us no rules about the way of our approach to him, but that he continues to *ſuffer all nations to go on in their own ways.* SERM. 16. Acts xiv. 16.

If there is no revelation, there can be no method of worſhip, but what every one's fancy leads him to; and if there is no worſhip, we ſhall live as without a God in the world. Thus do the principles of natural religion unravel, when men have wounded that which is revealed: They know not where to ſtop: *Theſe profane and vain babblings increaſe unto more ungodlineſs.* Our faith in this doctrine, that God was manifeſt in the fleſh, takes into it the whole ſcheme of duty. We believe it, becauſe it is the word of a God *who cannot lie;* and in that we go upon this opinion, that he has given us a perfect rule, a complete edition of his mind and will, and has brought in *the better hope by which we now draw nigh unto him.* 2 Tim. ii. 16. Heb. vii. 19.

3. This doctrine is the chief ground of our hope, and without that I am ſure there can be no religion: *He that comes unto God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* The devils, and they that dwell with them in the chains of darkneſs, know the former of theſe: They believe there is one God: *They believe it, and tremble;* but their eyes are ſhut from all hope of an acceptance with him. They have no expectation to pleaſe him with the gloomy ho- —— xi. 6. Jam. ii. 19.

mage

SERM. 16. mage of that world: It is deſpair that keeps them ſilent from his praiſe, and make them rebellious in
Col. i. 5. every thought about him: But the *hope that is laid*
1 John iii. *up for us in heaven brings forth fruit. He that has*
3. *this hope in him, purifies himſelf, even as He is pure.*
1 Cor. xv. That which makes us *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and al-*
58. *ways abounding in the work of the Lord*, is becauſe *we know our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

Chriſtianity ſets our practice in another light than any thing elſe can do. When a Heathen has done his utmoſt, how can he tell whether God will accept him or no? He muſt know, that the beſt of his actions are no more than duty: They make no atonement for ſin. He ſees God is juſt in the retributions of his providence, and what ground is there to ſuppoſe he will not be ſo in the world of ſpirits? And if that ſhould happen, where muſt
Pſ. cxliii. 2. a man of the brighteſt character appear? *In his ſight ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* They knew that mere duty procured no pardon, and therefore ran to ſacrifices as their refuge. And the more a man's conſcience was awakened, the greater bar-
Mic. vi. 7. barities did he uſe to make it eaſy, giving *his firſt-born for his tranſgreſſion, the fruit of his body for the ſin of his ſoul.* Chriſtianity is the only religion that tells us what is become of our ſins, that they are *laid on him who knew no ſin.* Without this there could be *no hope;* and it is that which oils
Cant. vi. 12. the wheels, and makes us like *the chariots of a willing people.*

4. This doctrine is apparently the concern of good men, ſuch as *work out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling.* I do not ſpeak now of the concern that the learned part of the world will maintain, for the opinions they have read, ſtudied, and profeſſed; but it is of more weight with me, what the humble Chriſtian ſaith, whoſe religion runs all into practice, who feels what he thinks, and does what he feels. When ſuch a one comes to

to God by Jeſus Chriſt, who is *the way, the truth and the life*, he uſes to refreſh his ſoul with this doctrine, That *the Mediator between God and man* is equal to both parties: That as he thought it no ſhame to be equal with man, he thought it *no robbery to be equal with God:* That he is *the days-man between us, who lays his hand upon us both*, which is an act of umpirage, and can never be done by an inferior. SERM. 16. Job ix. 33.

If I tell the ſerious Chriſtian, that his Saviour is leſs than the Father; nay, that he is *lower than the Angels*, he rejoices in it, and knows this was for *the ſuffering of death*. But ſhould I go on and tell him, that he is *not God*, that he is in no reſpect equal to the juſtice which we have offended, the holineſs which we have diſhonoured, and the mercy to which we muſt be reconciled, the man is thunder-ſtruck; not ſo much becauſe he has thought wrong for a great while, but becauſe he knows not how to direct his faith, or which way to turn his hope. He is unhinged for practice. The queſtion is not, 'What have I been *thinking*, but 'what have I been *doing* all this while? I have 'worſhipped him who is not infinite; I have de-'pended on him who is not omnipotent; I have 'run to an everlaſting righteouſneſs which never 'had an everlaſting author: My ſoul has been 'drawn off from the only living and true God, 'and has placed its confidence in him who is no 'more than a creature.' The horror of ſuch an argument will be equal to the concern that a perſon has about his ſoul: The more he is in earneſt for ſalvation, the more will he be terrified to have any doubts about the Divine perfections of that *only Name* that is given under heaven among men. Heb. ii. 9.

But, on the other hand, people who heed no worſhip, who *find their pleaſure on God's holy day*, who take his name in vain, are watching over the controverſy, as an eagle over a carcaſs; theſe long

SERM. 16. Pſ. xi. 3. to have *the foundations deſtroyed*, that there may be no difference, both in time and eternity, between the righteous and the wicked; *him that ſwears, and him that fears an oath.* Men are pleaſed to ſee a text in danger of loſing either its reputation or its meaning by a criticiſm; not for a love of the truth, but to gratify their contempt of the whole Bible. They will quarrel with the Myſteries of the Goſpel, that they may be eaſy under the breaches of the law.

It is plain, that the arguments againſt the Divinity of Chriſt are admired in a way that ſome of the authors, I hope, never deſigned they ſhould be. They have this viſible effect, to *make the heart of the righteous ſad*, to ſtrike off the believer from his main hope, and *to ſtrengthen the hands of the wicked*, to encourage the breaking of God's Sabbaths, the ridiculing of his ordinances, the profaning of his name, and the neglect of his worſhip. It is eaſy to ſee to which ſide of the queſtion the ſwearer and the drunkard do incline, and how the *religion that is pure and undefiled before God and our Father* will determine. We may ſoon know what the Spirit of grace, who mortifies the deeds of the body within us, will perſuade us to believe: John vii. 17. *If any man does the will of God, he ſhall know the doctrine.* If that is a rule, we ſhall be able to tell how the cauſe will iſſue. You may eaſily perceive which is the opinion that leads on prayer, and a ſerious hearing of the word; what is the devout notion, the doctrine that brings us into the preſence of God, and what puts the faith of a Chriſtian more upon a certainty.

In one way of talking, a good man knows not what he is doing; he comes to a God, and no God; he is in a miſgiving way of adoration; he does worſhip, and yet he does not: The Scripture has called it worſhip, but he daſhes it with a diſtinction: He talks of a Being who is eternal, and

yet

yet had a beginning; of one that is equal with the Father, and yet *not ſelf-exiſtent;* of an infinite majeſty derived from another, to whom he muſt be infinitely unequal; for there is no medium between a God and a creature. He that is made, cannot be God, but muſt be one of us; and though he has a greater glory than our nature, yet it muſt be infinitely lower than the Divine. Into ſuch a hovering uncertain way will this opinion throw us; and thoſe fluctuating thoughts will confound our prayer as much as our meditation: We ſhall be divided in ourſelves, afraid that faith ſhould give a Mediator too little glory, which may be ruinous to us, or give him too much, which may be idolatry in the ſight of God. SERM. 16.

Upon this you will find that men come to *reſtrain prayer;* it is a notion that takes them off their knees: If they are careleſs, they *will not* pray, and if they are thoughtful, they *dare not;* for theſe nice turns of language of a God by creation, or by office, or by eternal emanations, are what we can better paſs upon the world, than upon our own conſcience. When we come to worſhip, we muſt *know in whom we have believed.* Theſe hard words may do to talk with, but they will not do to pray with. The terms of our new doctrine are no more in the Bible than thoſe of the old creeds, and will not ſound very well in prayer.

5. There is no practical inconvenience in believing that God was manifeſt in the fleſh; it does no harm to our ſerioufneſs in any one article of piety or comfort; it does not alienate a man from the life of God, or make him *forſake thoſe aſſemblies,* that ſhould be continued becauſe of a day that is approaching: there is nothing irreligious to be concluded from it. If any one ſaith, that this is believing what is unaccountable to human reaſon, the Chriſtian confeſſes it, and at leaſt does as much good *with* a myſtery in his head, as another

SERM. 16. ther does *without* one. If it is argued, that he worſhips three Gods, he denies it both in language and in fact.

He avows every conſequence that men pretend to plead for by their other ſchemes; as the unity of the Divine Nature, the ſimplicity and ſupremacy of God. Theſe doctrines are ſacred to him, and he profeſſes nothing which he will allow to be inconſiſtent with them. If men are pleaſed to call theſe contradictions, we cannot help it. It is owned that we never could, and never ought to have believed them, had they not been given us in Scripture; and therefore, if there is any overdoing in this caſe, it is only in the profound deference that we pay to the wiſdom and truth of God, That we will receive what reaſon cannot comprehend, becauſe he has told us ſo. Now, it is plain, this does no harm; it feeds duty in our lives, it inſpires hope at our death. It is a doctrine that makes us live with devotion, and die with comfort.

6. It is certainly a thing very deſirable, and to be wiſhed for, that He who was manifeſt in the fleſh ſhould be God. Dr Clark purſues this argument againſt the Atheiſts, in his Sermons at Mr Boyle's Lecture. 'They muſt of neceſſity own,' ſaith he, 'that ſuppoſing it cannot be proved to 'be true, that at leaſt it is a thing very deſirable, 'and which any wiſe man would wiſh to be true, 'for the great benefit and happineſs of man, that 'there was a God, an intelligent, and wiſe, a juſt 'and good Being, to govern the world.' And when he has drawn out this reaſoning the length of three pages, he ſhuts it up in theſe words: 'Since 'they are unavoidably obliged to confeſs that it is 'a thing very deſirable there ſhould be a God, 'they muſt of neceſſity be very willing, nay de'ſire it above all things, to be convinced that their 'preſent opinion is an error.' What he pleads for

for the great principle of natural religion, we may bring over to the caſe of revelation. It is certain, that if he who came down among us is a God, our ſalvation is abundantly better than if he is not; becauſe, from hence we have a nobler inſtance of his love, a greater proof of the ſatisfaction he made, and a ſurer ground for our dependence upon him. SERM. 16.

(1.) It will be eaſily owned, that for a God to be manifeſt in the fleſh, is infinitely more kind and condeſcending than for the higheſt creature that ever was formed. For him to come into the world, of whom it is ſaid, that *the world was made by him*, gives a greater luſtre to the deſign, than if as many Angels had come down upon earth, as there are ſaints that go up to heaven; for ſtill all this while, it had been only one creature dying for another. We take our eſtimate of that love that filled the action, from the diſtance of him that performed it; and therefore it muſt be infinitely more for God to do it, than if all the univerſe ſhould conſpire and agree upon the favour.

(2.) In this we have a greater proof of the ſatisfaction that he has made. If his dying procured our pardon, that was not owing merely to the extremity of the ſorrows, but to the dignity of the Sufferer; *he did by himſelf purge away our ſins.* Heb. i. 3. An infinite nature was offended, and if there is any atonement to be made, it muſt be equal to the juſtice that calls for it. A life of three and thirty years, and a death of three or four hours, could never balance the eternal miſery of ſo many thouſands as are ſaved by it, if the chief conſideration was not had of the Perſon that endured them.

Had an Angel died for us, it had been *the juſt for the unjuſt*, a higher nature for a lower; but as the deſign of that death was to *bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs*, our very reaſon tells us ſuch a ſacrifice

SERM. 16. ſacrifice would not do, that it could not come up to the demands of eternal juſtice; it would have fallen ſhort of the deſign. And thus uncertain muſt a poor Chriſtian be left in the chief concern of his hope. He now expects that God will be Job xxxiii. 24. *gracious, becauſe he has found a ranſom. Chriſt Je-* 1 Tim. ii. 6. *ſus gave himſelf a ranſom for many, to be teſtified in due time.*

Now, the queſtion is, whether this would do? that his ſufferings were as ſevere as they could be, is plain, but were they meritorious? Admit but into the conſideration, that he who died was a God, and the difficulty is over, becauſe an infinite Nature muſt do every thing with an infinite value. Zech. xiii. 7. If the *ſword of God was directed againſt his fellow*, if he who took upon him *the form of a ſervant, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, then he brought all the merit we could wiſh into his *obedience to death, even the death of the croſs.* And the 1 Joh. i. 7. blood of ſuch a one *cleanſeth us from all ſin:* ſo that, you ſee, allowing him to be God, anſwers all the ſcruples of unbelief; it ſets our faith clear of many an incumbrance; we have more peace and joy in Rom. v. 2. believing. And if by this we *received the atonement, we have acceſs by faith into the grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

(3.) In this doctrine we have a better ground for our dependence upon him. *There is no other name* Heb. xii. 2. *given under heaven: We look to him as the author and finiſher of our faith*, and the time is coming Acts vii. 59. when we ſhall ſay, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.* 2 Tim. i. 12. Now, it is a great article in our comfort, to *know in whom we believe, that he is able to keep what we have committed to him againſt that day.*

'The beſt and nobleſt of creatures can do a great 'deal, but can they do enough? Is there not ſome-'thing that my ſoul wants, in the matters of reli-'gion and eternity, that lies out of their reach? I 'am ſure it was the effect of Omnipotence that I

'had

'had faith at firſt: and what muſt it be that will SERM. 16.
'take care of this noble creation, and lift it over
'to glory? Mine eye is upon Jeſus; if he is God,
'that anſwers all my queſtions at once, becauſe *to*
'*God all things are poſſible:* If he is not, I ſhall
'never be ſatisfied, that he *may not* prove too weak
'for my dependence; for there are ſome things
'that no creature can do, and how know I but one
'of them may be the ſecuring of my happineſs?
'Therefore denying his Divinity leaves me uncer-
'tain. He *may be* ſufficient as a creature, but I
'am not ſure that *he is*. Angels can carry my ſoul
'into Abraham's boſom, but I dare not rely upon
'them to make me perfect in holineſs, and finiſh
'the Divine image upon me in a moment: Nay,
'I can hardly truſt myſelf for this work in any
'lower hands than thoſe of a God: And therefore,
'if Chriſt is to be *the finiſher of this faith*, I can-
'not be ſo poſitive, and have that *confidence of hope*
'*which will be ſtedfaſt to the end*, if he is not *the*
'*Mighty God*, and *the Everlaſting Father*, as well Iſa. ix. 6.
'as *the Prince of peace*. It is *becauſe he continues* Heb. vii.
'*for ever, that he has an unchangeable prieſthood,* 24, 25.
'*and is therefore able to ſave to the uttermoſt.*'

Thus have I conſidered this copious article of the Chriſtian faith, as it is a Myſtery, and as it is a Myſtery of Godlineſs. The APPLICATION ſhall be only in two particulars.

1. Hence we ſee, it is quite wrong to pretend any explication of this doctrine, becauſe that is the way to deſtroy all the *myſtery*. There are two glories in the article: *Firſt*, That it is true; and *ſecondly*, That it is too great for the comprehenſion of human reaſon; and I am ſure it is no ſervice to the former, if we are ſtriving to lay aſide the latter. The moment that any people can find out a way for *the natural man to receive it*, it is no longer what my text has called it; they are but *darkening counſel by words without knowledge; uttering* Job xxxviii. 2. —xlii. 3.

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SERM. 16. *what they underſtand not, things too wonderful, which they know not.*

Though many have thus troubled us with words, and confounded us with ſimilitudes, yet we find it will not do: They have only armed the hereſies which they ought to have deſtroyed: And if it was as eaſy to batter down the faith, as it is to expoſe an illuſtration, there had been an end of the doctrine long before this time. The reaſon why it has yet a ſtanding in the church, is becauſe it yet continues a Myſtery, as it is delivered in *the word of God which abides for ever*; for we may ſay of every thing that man reckons his *glory, that it fades away. This way* of many of the ancients *was their folly*, and it is but folly in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, for *their poſterity to approve their ſayings.*

I will give you an inſtance how unhappy the primitive church has been in collecting the doctrine from that which is commonly called *the Apoſtles Creed.* If ſome have ſo little modeſty as to give it that name, it is a pity we have ſo little zeal as to allow it. It is deficient of the main principles of our religion, it is redundant in matters of leſs importance, and it is confuſed in the method of laying them together. There is nothing of the great doctrine of our faith, the Three that bear record in heaven. To ſay that believing in the Son, and in the Holy Ghoſt, expreſſes their equality with the Father, is wrong, for we are ſaid as much to believe *in the catholic church.* There is nothing of the atonement that Chriſt made, but only an hiſtorical account of his death; and that ſo indiſtinct, that I know not what difference to make between his *ſuffering* under Pontius Pilate, and his being *crucified* and *dying.* It will be hard to deliver theſe expreſſions from the charge of a *vain repetition.* There ſeems to be a deſign in all this, to tell the ſtory in a partial way, and leave the name of Pilate the governor as moſt abominable in the Creed,

though that of Caiaphas the High-prieſt was ſo in the Bible; but here is nothing in all this to tell us what he *died for*. That article of the forgiveneſs of ſins is placed under the head of the Holy Ghoſt, (from whom we have our ſanctification, but not our juſtification), and ſtands apart from thoſe ſufferings out of which it riſes; and then his incarnation is mentioned with ſuch a blunder, that all languages ought to be aſhamed of it. It was ſaid to the Virgin Mary, THOU ſhalt conceive and bear a Son; and that word is always applied to *Her*. But to have the act of conception attributed to the *Holy Ghoſt*, is ſuch a ſoleciſm as no antiquity can protect, and no later times ought to allow. SERM. 16.

How vain has it been to promote this doctrine by ways that God never appointed? What little arts are uſed to ſhew our orthodoxy! ſuch as bowing at the name of Jeſus, ſtanding up at the *Gloria Patri*, tagging *that* to the end of every pſalm, ſharing out a creed between two parts of a congregation, appointing a *Trinity Sunday*, with ſome other ſhifts of the like nature. Have we found theſe ſufficient barriers againſt hereſy? does the Deity of Chriſt appear the brighter for them? or, have they not rather proved a ſnare to wiſe men, and a babble to fools? I verily believe God has ſuffered this truth to be run down with learning and ſcorn, on purpoſe to ſhew us the vanity of truſting to human ramparts. If the Bible will not ſupport the doctrine, let it fall.

2. If it is a Myſtery, there is no knowing it without the help of the Holy Spirit: *He ſearches all things; yea the deep things of God. God reveals them to us by his Spirit;* and from him we have not only the matter but the language. We ſpeak of them not *in the words that man's wiſdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghoſt teaches, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.* Is it any wonder, that they who have bartered away all the operations of

1 Cor. ii. 10. —— 13.

SERM. 16. the Spirit in prayer, and every other act of religion, ſhould live to ſee his Divinity denied? But be you earneſt for this enlightening: Study the Scriptures, and call down His aſſiſtance who can *lead you into all truth;* for *that* God who was manifeſt in the fleſh, is *juſtified in the Spirit.*

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Dec. 7. 1718.

SERMON XVII.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

——*Juſtified in the Spirit.*

THE firſt great article in the Chriſtian faith is, that *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh;* that he became our companion, in order to be our ſacrifice: And the ſecond is like unto it, that *he is juſtified in the Spirit: On theſe two hang all the law and the prophets.* You have in them the ſubſtance of that revelation that ſpreads a glory quite through the Bible. The whole Goſpel in all the editions,
1 Joh. v. 10. that the world has of it, is compriſed in *the record that God has given of his Son.*

I have gone through the former of theſe, in which it was my fixed purpoſe to lay before you, not the fancies of men, whether learned or fooliſh, whether ancient or modern, but the plain doctrine
1 Cor. ii. 13. of the Scripture in its own language, *in words that the Holy Ghoſt teaches, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.* This is the ſafeſt way for me to ſpeak, and the moſt profitable for you to receive,
ver. 5. that *your faith may not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.* I ſhall, in the ſame method, apply myſelf to the conſideration of this o-

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ther branch, that the God who was manifeſt in the flesh was *juſtified in the Spirit.* There is in the words a twofold antitheſis, or diſtinction from what went before. SERM. 17.

The FIRST is in the *nature* or kind of the revelation; in the Fleſh he was *manifeſt*, in the Spirit he is *juſtified.* The former does not carry the diſcovery far enough for his whole glory; many ſaw *that* who were ſtrangers to the latter. That *manifeſtation* was an humbling of him, a making him of no reputation, ſhewing him in the form of a ſervant. But when he is ſaid to be *juſtified*, all that reproach is rolled away. He is defended, approved of, and ſet forth in his proper greatneſs.

SECONDLY, The other diſtinction here, is about the *manner* of the diſcovery: He was manifeſt *in the fleſh*, he is juſtified *in the Spirit:* which may be underſtood theſe three ways: 1*ſt*, That the ſeat of this juſtification is the ſpirit or ſoul of man. 2*dly*, That the nature of it is all inward and ſpiritual. 3*dly*, That the Author of it is no other than the Spirit of God. The laſt of theſe is the chief and proper ſenſe of the word, but the firſt and ſecond are ſo far from being oppoſite to it, that they are comprehended in it: For what the *Spirit* of God does in a way of teſtimony to the great Redeemer, is delivered to ſpiritual receivers, and conveyed with a ſpiritual evidence.

1. He was juſtified in the ſpirit, *i. e.* The *ſeat* of this juſtification, the place where it is fixed, is the ſoul of man. That he was *manifeſt* in the fleſh, we could *ſee with our* eyes; our hands might have *handled the word of life.* Friends and enemies, good and bad, believe it, and infidels came within the reach of this evidence. As he tells the Jews, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am.* But when he is *juſtified, that* lies all within; there the mind, the conſcience, the affections take in the argument. The *manifeſtation* here ſpoken of is ſeeing, but

1 John i. 1.

Joh. vii. 28.

SERM. 17. but this *juſtification* is feeling: As the Apoſtle ſaith,
Gal. i. 16. he *revealed his Son in me.* He was revealed *to* him in a light above the brightneſs of the Sun at noonday; he ſunk, and fell under the confuſion of that Glory: But beſides that, there is a report made to his ſoul; he is revealed in him.

And this is the great work of the Holy Spirit; the thing that he has in charge: Not only to make us acquainted with the ſtory, which we have heard
Luke i. 1, 2. with our ears; not merely that we may *moſt ſurely believe* the matters that were made known to us *by thoſe that were miniſters and eye-witneſſes of the*
2 Theſ. ii. 10. *Word*, but we are to *receive the love of the truth,*
Eph. iii. 17. *and ſo to be ſaved.* Chriſt muſt *dwell in our hearts by faith.* Indeed religion fills and feeds the life; it guides our practice, and ſupplies our duties, but the root of it is in the ſoul. The Jews would needs know *when* the kingdom of God came: Our Saviour baffles the queſtion at the ſame time that he
Luke xvii. 20. anſwers it; *The kingdom of God*, ſaith he, *comes not with obſervation:* It is not a matter to be ſtared at, but it lies *within you;* if you have it, it is there.
Col. i. 27. *Chriſt is in you the hope of glory.* This then is one interpretation of the words, that though God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, to be ſeen of all men, yet he is *juſtified in the Spirit:* His throne is eſtabliſhed, and his character maintained in the ſouls of believers. They
2 Cor. vi. 16. *are the temple of the living God, as God has ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.*

2. The *nature* of this juſtification is all ſpiritual: As it is delivered to the mind and conſcience, ſo it impreſſes theſe in a way ſuitable to the ſpirit of man. His manifeſtation was *in the fleſh*, by miracles, ſigns and wonders, to ſhew his power; by meekneſs, humility, and patience, to ſhew his purity; by trouble, ſhame, and death, to declare his merit: Theſe were external, the facts upon which he ſuſtained his character were ſeen abroad, the thing

thing was not done in a corner; but the manner of conveying this to the soul is different. The things of the Spirit of God are *spiritually discerned.* Though he has used similitudes, clothed his will with metaphors that are taken from sensible objects, yet it is not the resemblance that carries them to the mind. It is not acting over the passions, as the Papists do in the tragedy of *Good-Friday;* or troubling the imagination, and assaulting the senses with strong pictures and visible representations: These are the toys of a superstitious fancy; a person who grows up to a religious manhood will *put away such childish things.* If all the moisture of the body was drained out at the eyes, it would not make us penitents; nor does the tumult of the affections upon this great doctrine make us believers: We may have pity, sorrow, or affrightment at the thoughts of our Lord's death, and yet have no *faith in his blood: The fellowship of his sufferings* is a great deal more spiritual; it lies lower than the senses. The whole Christian life is begun, maintained, and nourished in this secret way. David observes, *Thou didst strengthen me with strength in my soul.* The Apostle speaks of *the hidden man of the heart which is not corruptible:* And in another place, of being *strengthened with all might in the inner man.*

SERM. 17.

1 Cor. ii. 14.

1 Cor. xiii. 11.

Phil. iii. 10.

Ps. cxxxviii. 3.

1 Pet. iii. 4.

Col. i. 11.

This shews us the nature of true religion; *Godliness* is opposed to *bodily exercise.* It does not consist in noise and bustle: *He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh:* Not but that the name of Jew was national and public, and the administration of circumcision was so external, that it past for a visible badge of their being God's people; and therefore it might have been affirmed with truth and propriety enough, that a person of such a nation was a Jew, and he who had received such an ordinance was really circumcised: But what he

1 Tim. iv. 8.

Rom. ii. 28.

SERM. 17. means here is, that these outward characters are of no value: If there is any good in the title or in the solemnity, it is as they became spiritual. *He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and of that circumcision which is of the heart, of the spirit, and not of the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God.* The same observation does he make upon an ordinance of the New Testament, *We are saved by baptism,* not as it is *the washing away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*

Rom. ii. 29.

1 Pet. iii. 21.

Your reading and hearing are duties, but there is no religion in these, any farther than your souls are engaged: The word did not profit the Jews, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* You ought to make a public profession of your faith in a Christ without you, in one who was manifest in the flesh; *contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints:* but your benefit in things lies all within; *With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.* It is one thing to be satisfied about the report that is given us of him, to know and admire the history, to approve and defend the scheme; and another to derive virtue and life from him, and feel *the healing that there is under his wings.* We must *obey from the heart that form of sound doctrine which is delivered to us.* He was manifest *in the flesh;* but if he is justified with you and me, it is *in the Spirit.* Both these interpretations of the words are supposed in, and derived from the next, *viz.*

Heb. iv. 2.

Jude 3.

Rom. x. 10.

Mal. iv. 2.

Rom. vi. 17.

3. That the Spirit is the Author of this justification; it is he that works upon our souls in the manner that I have been describing. The whole life of religion is begun and carried on by him: He brings us to Christ, and brings Christ to us. This is the great subject of practical and experimental religion; and I shall consider it in the following method:

1. How

1. How we are to understand this phrase; or what it is for a Saviour to be *justified.* SERM. 17.

2. Upon what particular *heads* he has this justification.

3. *When* the Spirit does this office.

4. That He who is thus justified must be GOD.

5. This, as well as the former branch of our religion, is *a Mystery of Godliness.*

I. We shall enquire into the sense of the words, that Christ Jesus was JUSTIFIED. You know, that when this is applied to sinners, it signifies a pardon to all guilt, and their acceptance in the beloved: That their *iniquities are not imputed to them,* but covered and blotted out, and remembered no more: They are blown away as a thick cloud, because *he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* But it is plain this cannot be the meaning of the word when it is applied to him, *who knew no sin; the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot.* He is not justified by the removal of any guilt, or the turning away of God's anger from him. He had *done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:* In him the Father was always well pleased. His justification is of another kind, and comprehends these two articles. Ps. xxxii. 1. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. i. 19.

1. That he was approved and owned.

2. That he was praised and admired.

1. He had a Divine approbation, both to his character and to his actions: That he was the Messiah, the anointed of the Lord; and that what he did was right and good. As he saith, *He that sent me is with me, the Father has not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him.* He was indeed *despised and rejected of men:* They called his pretensions an imposture; but at the same time he could say, *He that sent me is true, whom ye know not, but I know him, and am come from him.* The John viii. 29. Isa. liii. 3.

Apostle

SERM. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 4. Apoſtle obſerves this diſtinction, that *He was diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God, and precious.* And as he was always conſcious to this himſelf, ſo it is the very thing that the Spirit gives his witneſs to in the hearts of believers. As Chriſt John xvii. 7, 8. 25. faith of his diſciples, *They have known that all things, whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee; for I have given them the words which thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me. O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and theſe have known that thou haſt ſent me.* This was a matter of ſo much concern to our Lord, that he deſires ſuch a faith may ſpread among men, *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.*

This was his juſtification: *I know*, ſaith he to the Jews, *whence I came, and whither I go.* His inward aſſurance of this was the thing that he ſet in balance to all their reproaches, as it was fore- told he ſhould do: For this reaſon he *gave his back to the ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting;* for, ſaith he, *The Lord God will help me, therefore I ſhall not be confounded; therefore have I ſet my face as a flint, and I know that I ſhall not be aſhamed.* And in the purſuit of this account, he uſes the very word of my text, *He is near that juſtifies me; who will contend with me? let us ſtand together; who is mine adverſary? let him come near to me: behold the Lord God will help me; who is he that will condemn me?* You ſee here, that he conſiders himſelf as an accuſed perſon, as one upon his trial; and that he looks for all his vindication from Above, that none of their charges could be made good. And this was ſo evident to the confuſion of enemies, that the Apoſtle Peter could

Iſa. l. 6, 7, 8, 9.

could tell the Jews, *That Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by signs, and miracles and wonders that God did by him in the midst of them, as themselves also know.* SERM. 17. Acts ii. 22.

2. He was also praised and admired, as another part of his justification. As it is written, *Let God be true, and every man a liar, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* There was more than a bare testimony given to his character; for this came attended with commendations. Thus saith the Father of him, *He is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* When the Seventy returned and told him, *Even the devils are subject to us through thy name,* he tells them there was something else which they should rather rejoice in, *viz.* that *their names were written in heaven:* but it is observed, *in that hour* he was filled with Divine pleasure from two things, *first,* The opening of his kingdom among men, that God who had *hid these things from the wise and prudent, revealed them unto babes;* and, *secondly,* From the fulness that this was an earnest of, *All things are delivered to me of my Father.* This he declared at last, that *the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and went to God.* Rom. iii. 4. Mat. iii. 17. Luke x. 17. —— 20, 21, 22. Joh. xiii 3.

II. On what heads is Christ thus justified? I have hinted at these already, and shall now be more distinct and copious. You will find, that the vindication given to our blessed Lord is in the following articles:

1. As to his mission, that he was sent of God.
2. As to his personal glory.
3. As to his fitness for the undertaking.
4. As to the propriety of those methods that he used.
5. As to his claim of the great reward above.

SERM. 17. 6. As to his actual poſſeſſion of it. Upon thoſe heads did the Spirit give a teſtimony to him, and thus was he *juſtified* from all the unbelief of men, and the reproach of devils.

1. He cleared up his Divine miſſion; that he was *ſent of God* into the world, as the long expected bleſſing, the hope of Iſrael. *The promiſe made to the fathers was fulfilled to their children.* The Spirit revealed him to thoſe that received the report. *He that received his teſtimony ſet to his ſeal that God is true.* Philip comes full of the character to Nathaniel, *We have found Him of whom Moſes, in the law, and the Prophets did write.*

Acts xiii. 32, 33.

Joh. iii. 33.

— i. 45.

And, before this, when he was in the mere paſſive age of life, a poor helpleſs infant, there was care taken to make him known; *then* was he juſtified in the Spirit. Thus we read of Simeon, *a juſt and devout man*, that *he waited for the conſolation of Iſrael;* as all the good people of every age have done; they longed, they prayed, they believed the coming of a Meſſiah: but of this good man it is ſaid, that *the Holy Ghoſt was upon him, i. e.* as it is afterwards explained, it was *revealed unto him by the Holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not taſte death, before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt.* This was preparatory warning; but beſides that, the teſtimony is given in a nearer way; for it is ſaid, that *he came* BY THE SPIRIT *into the temple, when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law.* So that you ſee what care the Spirit had to make this diſcovery; how early he juſtified that great Redeemer, who was then *manifeſt in the fleſh.* Good old Simeon was deſirous to deliver up his life with his conviction, as if he had now ſtaid long enough: *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people.* This was from the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt; for *Joſeph and his mother marvelled*

Luke ii. 25, 26.

ver. 27.

— 29, 30, 31.

— 33.

at

at the things that were ſpoken of him. Nay, that SERM. 17. at the mouth of two witneſſes every thing might be eſtabliſhed, there was alſo one *Anna a propheteſs,* Luke ii. 38. *who coming in at that inſtant gave thanks likewiſe to the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem.*

This ſhews that there was a great number of people who believed that the fulneſs of time was not far off. As Simeon waited for the conſolation of Iſrael, ſo others *looked for redemption in Jeruſalem.* And therefore the great queſtion now muſt be that of John's diſciples, *Is this he that ſhould* Mat. xi. 3. *come, or look we for another?* To that the Spirit gave in his witneſs; he kept thoſe whom the Lord had choſen, from wandering after impoſtors: As our Saviour obſerves, *All that ever came before me* John x. 8. *are thieves and robbers, but the ſheep did not hear them.* Now, what is it that always did, and always ſhall preſerve this little flock from running into *the error of the wicked?* Nothing in themſelves, but only the care of that Spirit who *leads into the way of all truth.* From this, it is impoſſible to deceive the Elect; that the ſigns and wonders which thoſe falſe Prophets and falſe Chriſts are ſaid to do, had no influence upon them. Such as he had no care of are caught in the ſnare. *Ye* Joh. x. 26. *believe not, becauſe you are not of my ſheep,* ſaith our Lord to the Jews. Antichriſt, who is called the beaſt, is ſaid *to make war with the Saints, and* Rev. xiii. *to overcome them; for power is given him over all* 7, 8. *kindreds, and tongues, and nations; and all that dwell on the earth ſhall worſhip him, whoſe names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.*

2. Chriſt is juſtified by the Spirit as to his own glory, that which he has in his Perſon. *He that* John iii. *comes from above is above all. The Spirit,* ſaith he, 31. *ſhall glorify me; for he ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you.* And what is his? *All that the Father* —— xvi. *has* 15.

SERM. 17. *has is mine, and therefore I ſaid he ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you; q. d.* My promiſe refers to no leſs than the teſtimony that the Spirit ſhall give of my equality with the Father. And though this is a myſtery, it is nevertheleſs a truth; it is received with adoration; it comes within none of our deſcriptions: we are not able to explain it, and yet it is believed: it is what we hold by, as *an anchor of hope*, ſure and ſtedfaſt; it is what we are built upon, as *a Pillar and Ground of Truth*. This is the uſual work of *the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation*, when he has been a Spirit of grace and ſupplications.

If men live in a ſenſe of religion, in a courſe of prayer and dependence, to them it is the dear doctrine of their ſouls, and what they tremble at the thoughts of parting with; for *if the foundations be deſtroyed, what can the righteous do?* I may appeal to the characters of perſons, that a belief of this doctrine is no bar to *free-thinking*; that the people who entertain it are far from giving up the liberty of their reaſon; they are not behind-hand with others in paying a regard to that faculty. To repreſent them as going on in a blind implicit way, is to abuſe the tendereſt part of their reputation. The man who appropriates the title of *free-thinker* to himſelf, is guilty of an inſolence to the world, and a piece of ill manners to his whole nature.

Pſal. xi. 3.

Bleſſed be God, we have ſearched the Scriptures, we have looked into them diligently, and endeavoured to know the mind of the Spirit; and we think it is a rational way of talking, that if the Spirit is to glorify Chriſt, he is to ſhew us his full glory; and *that* not in deceitful terms, ſuch as may enſnare us into idolatry: Making him the firſt of the creation, is far from coming up to his glory. If he is really a God, nothing ſhort of Divinity can be his proper character. It is in vain

to

to tell me how much better he is than the Angels; SERM. 17. that is not enough if I am to conceive of him as the firſt cauſe, and the laſt end of the whole creation; *For by him were all things created that are* Col. i. 16. *in heaven, and that are on earth, viſible or inviſible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him.*

Now, the Spirit is ſaid to glorify him, by *taking of his*, and ſhewing them unto us. And what may be called *his?* the allotment made to him of the Father? ſome limited portion? no, ALL *that the Father has are mine.* This cannot be true upon any other ground than a full equality; for if he is a creature, he is ſo far from having all that the Father has, that there is the ſame infinite diſtance between him and a God, that there is between a God and a worm. Every creature is nearer to an inſect than he is to a God; no degrees of glory can ſet him above the common character. But how does Chriſt appear to thoſe in whoſe ſouls the Spirit has taken *his* things, and ſhewn them? Did you never know a perſon looſe both in his talk and his morals, who deſpiſed God's law in his actions, and the Goſpel in his arguments? Have you never known ſuch a one awakened, convinced, and made to cry out, What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Has he, after this, come to be eaſy and ſatisfied in religion, to have a peace and hope in believing? Enquire of ſuch a one what he takes his Saviour to be, what notions he has of *him*, who is the author, and muſt be the finiſher of his faith? Certainly the man, by growing ſober, has not loſt his reaſon. Becauſe he minds the Sabbath, dare not ſwear and drink as he uſed to do, will you for this call him an enthuſiaſt? Here is a remarkable change in his life, and ſhall there be no regard had to his way of thinking? I am apt to believe, it is very eaſy to gueſs on which ſide of the queſtion ſuch an awakened penitent, ſuch an enlightened convert, would

SERM. 17. would give his anſwer. He will cry out, as Thomas did upon a recovery, *My Lord and my God.*

John xx. 28.

3. Chriſt is juſtified in his fitneſs for the undertaking; that he is equal to the deſign. God has *laid help on one that is mighty, one choſen from among the people, an interpreter, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto man his uprightneſs.* We are to believe that he had all that is required in a Mediator between God and man; a purity in himſelf, that he was the holy One of God; a merit in his ſufferings, that when he was *numbered with the tranſgreſſors, he made his ſoul an offering for ſin. He put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* This can ariſe from nothing but the dignity and value of his Perſon; not only what is *moral*, that he ſhould be innocent, and die the juſt for the unjuſt; *that* might have been ſaid of an Angel; but what may be called a *natural* dignity. The atonement that he made was fit for an infinite Majeſty to receive, and equal to all that an infinite Juſtice demanded; and therefore we read of a GOD *that purchaſed the Church with his own blood.*

Pſ. lxxxix. 19. Job xxxiii. 23. Iſa. liii. 10. 12. Heb. ix. 26. Acts xx. 28.

To ſay, that this expreſſion does not prove him God, becauſe as ſuch he could not die or bleed, is an argument that concludes as much againſt their own ſcheme as any other; for if he is allowed to have any nature beſides the human, if he is above the Angels, even *that nature* could not be ſaid to die. Had he been only an Angel, to talk of the blood of ſuch a one, is a harſhneſs of language that we could not allow; and it can be underſtood no other way than this, that though he died, was a man, a partaker of that fleſh and blood that made him capable of ſuch a fate, yet he was alſo to be conſidered under a higher character. Now, it is plainly ſaid of him who purchaſed the Church with his own blood, that his *ſuperior Nature* was that of a GOD; that as it is certain he was more

than a man, ſo this Word is to tell you *what* he is more. SERM. 17.

If any would turn the phraſe thus, that the Church is indeed the flock of God, which Chriſt has purchaſed with his blood, methinks, the holy Spirit was aware of that ſhuffle, and has barred againſt it, by telling us, that this God purchaſed the flock with HIS OWN *blood*. That phraſe is ſo fully relative to the Perſon of whom he ſpeaks, that according to his way of talking, the Proprietor and the Purchaſer of this Church is the ſame. He *whoſe* it is (that is God) has laid down the price of it.

There is another interpretation of theſe words that I have heard of, (for if we follow theſe notions cloſely, we ſhall find them ſhift and double), that the expreſſion *purchaſed with his blood* does not refer to God in the clauſe immediately foregoing, but to Chriſt of whom he had formerly ſpoken; but if you conſult your Bibles, you will ſee that he had not mentioned the name of Chriſt in leſs than ſeven verſes before; and one would think the opinion is as far-fetched as the connection, and that certainly people muſt be ſtrangely in love with a notion, which they are reſolved to have againſt all the rules of grammar and language. Whether of the expoſitions appears to have leſs of force and violence, ours that joins a word with that which is the neareſt to it, or theirs that trails it backwards the length of ſeven verſes, into a ſentence that was entire and concluded before?

It is upon the head of his fitneſs for the work of redemption, that the Spirit glorifies the Son: *Our converſation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* And, what are we looking for at his hand? that which is no leſs than the work of Omnipotence, what none but a God can do: *That he will change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according* Phil. iii. 20, 21.

SERM. 17. *ing to the working whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* If any one ſaith, that as he is the beſt and greateſt of creatures, ſo every thing muſt be ſubject to him, *that* puts my faith however out of a Divine correſpondence: it fixes on an object that is *not God.* But, ſuppoſing we ſhould uſe other Scriptures as we do *this*, and ſay that the term of *ſubduing all things* does not ſignify Omnipotence, where ſhould we have one text to prove that perfection of the Divine Nature? or how could it be more fully aſſerted of the Father, than it is here of the Son? What reaſon have I to think that the words in this epiſtle mean infinitely leſs than they do in Job xlii. 2. *I know that thou canſt do every thing, and that no counſel can be withholden from thee?* It is from the Divinity of Chriſt that we argue his fitneſs for the whole deſign; for he
Heb. iii. 3, 4. muſt be *counted worthy of more honour than Moſes, inaſmuch as he built the houſe, and ſo has more honour than the houſe.* And he *who has thus built all things, is* GOD.

Dec. 21, 1718.

SERMON XVIII.

4. OUR Saviour is juſtified in the Spirit, as to the propriety of thoſe methods that he uſed in working out the redemption of his people. He proceeded in the right way, that which infinite wiſdom had contrived. He purſued the plan that was laid in *the counſel of peace. The Son of man went as it was written of him;* he ſpake of his ſuf-
Joh. x. 15. ferings as the reſult of a previous agreement: *The Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down*

down my life for the ſheep. Both his enemies and his people were apt to confine their thoughts, and look no farther than the malice of the Jews, that was all enraged by the envy of the prieſts. Thus narrowly do the two Diſciples that were going to Emmaus tell their melancholy ſtory, that *Jeſus of Nazareth was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, but the chief prieſts and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him; but*, ſay they, *we truſted it had been he who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael;* as if they had ſaid, it appears by ſuch a fate, that we were miſtaken in our man. They knew not how to bring the croſs into their notions of a Saviour: a death of that nature had razed out all the regard they uſed to have for his miracles and doctrine. SERM. 18. Luke xxiv. 19, 20, 21.

But in this he is juſtified by the Spirit: all that ſcandal is over, which was once ſo important to the Diſciples. We can now conſider the whole train of his reproaches, torments, and his death, as a deſign: *Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* What a different way of thinking had theſe good men got into! Before his death they could never be patient at what he often told them, that the Son of man ſhould be delivered into the hands of men, and they would take him and crucify him. Peter rebuked him for it: *Lord, this be far from thee. Sorrow filled their hearts*, they knew not what to ſay of it; and yet after theſe things were over, the offence of the croſs was made to ceaſe. It was ſo far from being their dread and ſhame, as they once thought it, that they could *glory in the croſs of Chriſt:* And though this doctrine remained a ſtumbling-block to their countrymen the Jews, it was none to them. *They preached Chriſt crucified both to the Jews and Greeks, the wiſdom of God, and the power of God.* Acts ii. 23. Joh. xvi. 6. Gal. vi. 14. 1 Cor. i. 24.

SERM. 18. It is plain from a cloud of witneſſes out of the Old Teſtament, that the great deſign of ſalvation was always revealed as a thing to be brought about by the ſufferings of a Redeemer. The firſt promiſe of all, was not ſilent upon this doctrine: for though *the ſeed of the woman* was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, yet the ſerpent was to *bruiſe his heel;* and all along, as a greater light came in with later prophecies, it was ſtill to ſhew that there muſt be an atonement. But the Jews, to whom the oracles of God were committed, had a vail upon their minds, and to the laſt they were blind as to this character of a Meſſiah. They who were ſo critical in knowing the place of his birth, and the family out of which he was to ariſe, never ſo much as think of
Dan. ix. 26. the main part that he ſhould act, that he *was to be cut off, but not for himſelf.* This was ſo far from being their opinion, that they give it out as a chal-
Mat. xxvii. 42. lenge, *If he be the Chriſt the King of Iſrael, let him deſcend from the croſs, and we will believe.* Now, had he deſcended from the croſs, they ought not to have believed him: had he not ſubmitted to death, and even of that ſcandalous ſort, he had been none of that Saviour who was to *bear our ſins in his body on the tree,* and to make an *open ſhew of principalities and powers, triumphing over them in the air.*

Upon this head he is juſtified by the Spirit: The Apoſtles made no ſecret of that, which we ſhould have thought they might have concealed, his being *numbered among the tranſgreſſors.* This was no longer a reproach to them, but what they ventured
Acts xiii. 27, 28, 29. to talk of in the moſt public manner: *They that dwell at Jeruſalem and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every ſabbath-day, have fulfilled them in condemning him: And though they found no cauſe of death in him, yet they deſired Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain: And when they had fulfilled all that was*

written

written of him, they took him down from the tree, SERM. 18.
and laid him in a ſepulchre. This ſcandalous circumſtance of his death they are not aſhamed of, but are to own it on all occaſions, not only in their doctrines to the people, but their arguments to the enemy. Thus they confronted the greateſt authority at Jeruſalem: *The God of our fathers raiſed up* Acts xiii. 30.
Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree.

5. He is juſtified in the Spirit, as to his claim of a reward in heaven. There was a glory deſigned for him, as the recompence of all his duty and trouble. Under that view the Father has called him by the name of a ſervant: *My ſervant ſhall* Iſa. lii. 13, 14, 15.
deal prudently, and be exalted and extolled, and be very high: AS *many were aſtoniſhed at him, his viſage was ſo marred more than any man's, and his form more than the ſons of men.* In proportion to the aſtoniſhment that was occaſioned by this, ſo *ſhall he ſprinkle many nations.* It is very evident, the reward conferred upon him is more than his own perſonal glory above; it alſo takes in an empire below. Thus he is to ſprinkle many nations, drop the Goſpel among them *as the rain, and diſtill* Deu. xxxii. 2.
it as the dew, by which he will convey a ſenſe of his majeſty into the minds of thoſe who before deſpiſed him: *Kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him; for that which has not been told them ſhall they ſee, and that which they have not heard ſhall they conſider.*

Little could his enemies, or indeed his Diſciples, imagine, that *the contradiction of ſinners which he en-* Heb xii. 3.
dured againſt himſelf, was both the merit and the preparation of a future happineſs. But afterwards he approved himſelf to their reaſons upon this head: *Ought not Chriſt to ſuffer theſe things, and to enter* Luke xxiv. 26.
into his glory? His enduring the croſs, and deſpiſing the ſhame, is accounted for by this ſuppoſition: he ſubmitted to all *that,* for *the joy that was ſet before* him. This came to be underſtood as a good

SERM. 18. good argument afterwards: *He was obedient to*
Phil. ii. 8, 9. *death, even the death of the croſs, and* THEREFORE *God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* During his lifetime he was e-
Iſa. liii. 4. ſteemed *ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted.* Thus it was foretold they would reaſon: *Let us perſecute and take him, for God has forſaken him;* and ſo they did in fact: *He truſted in God that he would ſave him, let him deliver now if he will have him.*
Joh. xvii. 4, 5. And yet in all this he *glorified the Father upon earth, and finiſhed the work that was given him to do*; upon which he lays his claim to *the glory he*
Rev. v. 12. *had with the Father before the world was: Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.*

6. The Spirit juſtifies Chriſt in his actual poſſeſſion of the reward. In this world he had a claim
——iii. 21. to it, and now he enjoys the thing itſelf: *I overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne.* This gives a value to the other doctrines; for if it can be proved that he was raiſed by the Father, and ſet at his own right hand, it will from thence be concluded, that all his former ſufferings were appointed and admired. Now, to this the Holy Spirit has given an abundant evidence, and made it the main article of our religion. The Apoſtles
Acts i. 22. were ſet apart to be *witneſſes of his reſurrection;* and in this office they acted *by the Spirit*, who had been promiſed to them. Thus they tell their ene-
——iii. 14, 15. mies, *Ye denied the holy One and the juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God has raiſed from the dead, whereof we are witneſſes.* They repeat the ſame afterwards upon another trial, with the addition of this greater teſtimony, that is mentioned in my
——v. 31, 32. text: *Him has God exalted with his own right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins; and we are witneſſes*

of

of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him. When they speak in this manner, it is agreeable to what our Lord himself had told them: He said unto them, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and ye are witnesses of these things; and behold I send the promise of my Father upon you.* SERM. 18. Luke xxiv. 46. 48, 49.

The miracles they wrought were so many attestations to the glory of a Redeemer. It is thus thar Peter explains the cure of the poor lame man in Solomon's porch: *Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it know unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole.* He goes on to tell them what they would not believe, that *this is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner; neither is there salvation in any other.* The preaching the Gospel, and the wonders they shewed in confirmation of that doctrine, were so many public arguments that their Saviour had *loosed the bonds of death.* Therefore it it said, that *with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.* This was a Divine testimony given into the faith of believers: *The salvation that began to be spoken by the Lord Jesus, was confirmed to us by them that heard him; God bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.* This leads me to shew, Acts iv. 8, 9, 10. ——11, 12. ver. 33. Heb. ii. 3, 4.

III. *When* the holy Spirit gives in his testimony, and fulfils the office that is devolved upon him, of justifying that God who was manifest in the flesh. This may be considered in a way of gradation: He does

SERM. 18. does it *at ſundry times and in divers manners.* The Scripture has furniſhed us with ſeveral particulars. Chriſt was juſtified in the Spirit,

1. By the prophetical warnings that were given of him.
2. By his perſonal furniture.
3. At the hour of his death and ſuffering.
4. More eſpecially at his reſurrection.
5. At the day of Pentecoſt.
6. In the conviction of ſinners.
7. In the conſolation of believers.

1. The Spirit juſtified our dear Lord before his coming into the world. This he did through all
Gen. iv. 26. the ages of religion, ever ſince *men began to call upon the name of the Lord.* It was by faith that
Heb. xi. 4. they offered *acceptable ſacrifices,* down from righ-
1 Pet. i. 10, teous Abel to the fulneſs of time: *Of this ſalva-*
11. *tion the Prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace of God that ſhould come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Chriſt that was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified before-hand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow.* You ſee, this was their main enquiry: the thing they propheſied of was the grace that ſhould come to us: the Spirit that they propheſied by was *the Spirit of Chriſt:* the diſcoveries they received from *that,* were about the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow. They did not conſider themſelves as the ſervants of a particular generation, but took it for granted they were writing for poſterity:
ver. 12. *Unto whom it was revealed, that not to themſelves, but to us they did miniſter the things that are reported unto you.*

Though Chriſt was only manifeſt in theſe laſt
ver. 20. times, yet he was *verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world unto our glory:* and that was all along the food given in to the faith and hope of the Old Teſtament ſaints. The Apoſtle tells the

Jews, that this is an affair of which God had *spoken by the mouth of all his Prophets since the world began;* by which assertion you see what a compass he takes both in breadth and length. *All the holy Prophets* have borne this testimony, and they have done it ever *since the world began.* He gives them an instance, that Moses *truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me:* And then adds, *Yea, all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days:* As if that was their main business, to let the world know what God would do in the fulness of time. He speaks of this as the grand concern: *Behold the days come, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land.* Out of these particulars the Apostle works an argument, by which he would insinuate himself, and the doctrine that he came with, to the esteem of the Jews: *Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers.* This was the office of the Spirit in those early ages, not only to give them light about their present duty, but to put them in mind of that *better thing that God had provided for us.* For these *all died in faith, not having received the promises, but they saw them afar off, were persuaded of them, and confessed they were pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.* It was thus that David, *being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath unto him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

SERM. 18.
Acts iii. 21.
ver. 22. 24.
Jer. xxxiii. 14, 15.
Heb. xi. 40.
ver. 13.
Acts ii. 29, 30, 31.

2. Our

SERM. 18. 2. Our Lord was juſtified in the Spirit as to his perſonal furniture. We read of his qualifications for an office that never any but himſelf was put into: *He whom God has ſent, ſpeaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by meaſure to him.* What he did either in a way of duty or of miracle is aſcribed to this. It was thus that he diſcovered himſelf to be the Mediator between God and man, and determined the faith of good people in the greateſt concern they could have. John the Baptiſt muſt have been acquainted with him in his childhood and youth, their mothers being ſo near relations. He muſt have heard of the wonderful things that happened at the viſit that Mary paid to Eliſabeth, who cried out, *Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord ſhould come unto me; for lo, as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in my ears, the babe leapt in my womb for joy.* He heard, no doubt of it, what things his own father ſaid at his circumciſion, that he ſhould be *the Prophet of the Higheſt*, and cloſed it with theſe words; *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael who has redeemed and viſited his people;* and what Simeon and Anna declared ſoon after the birth of Jeſus. Though he continued in the deſarts, he could not be ſuch a ſtranger in Iſrael, as not to have the record of theſe events.

John iii. 34.

Luke i. 43, 44.

ver. 68. 76.

But yet he profeſſes that the main teſtimony was given by the Holy Spirit: *I knew him not*, ſaith he, *i. e.* not fully, not free of all ſcruple, *but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he that ſhall baptize with the Holy Ghoſt; and I ſaw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* The paſſage he refers to, is what the ſeveral Evangeliſts have given us, that *when Jeſus was baptized and prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcended, in a bodily ſhape like a dove, upon him, and*

Joh. i. 33, 34.

Mat. iii. 16, 17.

a

a voice came from heaven which ſaid, Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleaſed. Thus does Chriſt ſpeak of his miniſterial qualifications, that a fulneſs of wiſdom was in him: *The Spirit of the Lord,* ſaith he, *is upon me, becauſe he has anointed me to preach the Goſpel.* And this was long ſince foretold, that the Spirit of the Lord ſhould *reſt upon him, the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and might, the ſpirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.* Thus he performed his miracles, as Peter tells Cornelius, *God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil; for God was with him.* This was the method into which he threw his deſigns, for *he was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the devil.*

SERM. 18.
Luke iv. 18.
Iſa. xi. 2.
Acts x. 38.
Mat. iv. 1.

3. The Spirit juſtified our dear Lord at the hour of his death and ſufferings. This was by giving value to his blood, and ſupporting the courage and reſolution of his human nature. The ſcripture has been very particular, that *through the eternal Spirit, he offered himſelf without ſpot unto God.* It was not merely the extremity of dying that brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, but the merit aroſe from the dignity of him that ſuffered. He was then full of the Holy Ghoſt. This ſet a joy before him that made him neither afraid nor aſhamed to die; for if it is ſaid of Stephen, that *he being full of the Holy Ghoſt, looked up ſtedfaſtly to heaven, and ſaw the glory of God,* much more may it be affirmed of him who had not the Spirit by meaſure.

Heb. ix. 14.
Acts vii. 55.

4. Another time when the Spirit did his office, was upon the reſurrection of our Saviour. Then was *he declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holineſs.* Sometimes this work is aſcribed to the Father, that *he glorified his Son Jeſus, he raiſed him from the dead, and gave him*

Rom. i. 4.
Acts iii. 13.
1 Pet. i. 21.

SERM. 18. *glory.* *Thou,* ſaith Chriſt, *wilt not leave my ſoul in*
Pſ. xvi. 10. *hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee corruption.* Sometimes it is ſaid of the Son himſelf,
Acts ii. 24. that *he looſed the pains of death, becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.* This agrees
Joh. x. 18. to what he had told them before: *No man takes my life from me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*

And in ſeveral places it is aſſerted of the Holy
Rom. viii. 11. Ghoſt. Hence we read of *the Spirit of Him who raiſed up Jeſus from the dead,* that this Spirit *is to quicken us.* He was put to death in the fleſh, but
1 Pet. iii. 18. *quickened in the Spirit.* Under this head I may bring in the great things that he did between his leaving the ſepulchre, and going up for good and all to the kingdom. His converſation with the Diſciples for the ſpace of forty days is mentioned
Acts i. 2. this way, that *he through the Holy Ghoſt had given commandment to the Apoſtles whom he had choſen.*
Luke xxiv. 45. It was thus that he inſtructed them, and *opened their underſtandings;* for he had told them before
John xvi. 12, 13. his death, *I have many things to ſay to you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend in my name, he ſhall lead you into all truth.* So that when he ſpake to them concerning things pertaining to the kingdom of God, it was *through the Holy Ghoſt* that he gave them commandments. In this manner they were not only perſuaded of his reſurrection themſelves, but led into the right way of declaring it to others: *That repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached among all nations in his name, beginning at Jeruſalem.* Thus he was juſtified in the Spirit.

5. This was moſt eminently done at the day of Pentecoſt; they tarried at Jeruſalem till they were
Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 5. *endued with power from on high.* This he calls *baptizing them with the Holy Ghoſt; he fell upon every one of them.* All the retinue of that effuſion was wonderful, the manner of its coming on, and

every

every conſequence that followed after. There was *ſuddenly a ſound from heaven as the ruſhing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting: And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire; And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* This amazed, as well it might, *all the devout men* that were gathered from every nation to the feaſt at Jeruſalem. But, SERM. 18. Acts ii. 2, 3, 4. ver. 7.

Peter defends the Providence againſt them that *mocked*, and explains it to thoſe that *marvelled:* That they are to underſtand it two ways, *firſt*, As an accompliſhment of an ancient prophecy out of Joel; and, *ſecondly*, As a teſtimony given from heaven to that Perſon whom they had deſpiſed, and hated, and killed. From hence they might ſee, that he was admitted into the honours of another world, though he had been ſo rudely treated in this: *Being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he has ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear.* What they ſaw and heard gave in a full evidence, that though he had been deſpiſed and rejected of men, yet he was choſen of God, and precious. And upon the whole, he concludes, *Let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that the ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, has God made both Lord and Chriſt.* By this they might find he was another ſort of perſon than they took him for; the great Head of authority above, and the great Head of influence below. Such an effuſion as that, was an argument of his having a throne. He could not be deſerted of the Father, as they imagined, if he received ſuch a fulneſs into his own hands, and made theſe diſtributions among his people. This is what the Apoſtle Peter enlarges on in his ſpeech or ſermon, and he refers to it afterwards — 33. — 36.

SERM. 18. terwards in his letter, that *the Goſpel is preached*
1 Pet. i. 12. *with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven.*

6. The Spirit continues to juſtify Chriſt in the conviction of ſinners; he attends the preaching of the Goſpel, and makes it uſeful to thoſe who are *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, as our Lord promiſed he
John xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. ſhould do: *When he is come he ſhall convince the world of ſin, and righteouſneſs, and judgment; Of ſin, becauſe they believe not in me; Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the Father, and ye ſee me no more; Of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged.*

Theſe are things that none but the Spirit can impreſs upon us; they are what man's wiſdom is ſo far from teaching, that it reckons them *fooliſhneſs*. The ſin of not believing in him gives no trouble till they are made to ſee what he is in himſelf, and what he muſt be to them, if ever they are happy. Their unbelief is what they uſed to plead for; they had a great many arguments to defend it; but when the Spirit fell to work with them, as it is ſaid of the Jews who gloried in ha-
Acts ii. 37. ving ſhed his blood, they were *pricked in their hearts, and cried out, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* then this ſin lay heavy upon them.

It is the ſame as to that righteouſneſs that is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. Men by nature have no notion of any other acceptance with God than what they give themſelves: But when the Holy Ghoſt has humbled us for our iniquity, he ſhews us that no merit of ours can be the ground of a pardon; but the righteouſneſs in which we are juſtified is owing to this, that *Chriſt is gone to the Father*. He leads us up to the Advocate whom we have above, and engages all our deſires to be *found in him*. And then, leſt their convictions ſhould be attended with dark thoughts about the event of a war with Satan, he tells them that *the prince of this world is judged*, and that we come

by

by our peace, and hope, and joy, in believing. It is his bleſſing upon our miniſtry, that makes Chriſt known among you: *Ye are manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtles of Chriſt miniſtred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart.* SERM. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 3.

7. The Spirit juſtifies our bleſſed Lord by the conſolations that are given to a believer. Our duty is expreſſed by *walking in the Spirit;* our privilege is called a being *led by the Spirit;* and as many as are ſo *are the ſons of God.* Now, in all this operation, he is leading the ſoul nearer to Jeſus Chriſt. *He ſhall glorify me,* ſaith our Lord, *for he ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you.* Thus he carries on *the work of faith with power.* The holineſs he recommends to *us,* is *that* he ſhews in Chriſt; He takes of *his:* And when he conveys any comfort into our ſouls, it is a taking of *his,* revealing his love and his grace, and from each of theſe he raiſes in the believer a courage to die as the Apoſtle argues: *Now little children, abide in him, that when he ſhall appear, ye may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.* Gal. v. 25. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John ii. 28.

The ſanctification that the Spirit gives us is a living argument that Chriſt is *Head over all things unto the Church:* We, as the ſeveral members, are nouriſhed by a derivation from him, and *increaſe with the increaſe of God.* It is thus we know, that he has reconciled our ſouls to Divine juſtice, and that he has renewed and prepared them for the Divine mercy. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jeſus Chriſt; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that bears witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth.* How does he bear witneſs of theſe things, that Chriſt came both for our atonement and for our holineſs; but by throwing his evidence within, giving us a conformity to him, and making us partakers of his purity and of a gladneſs among *his* fellows? This 1 John v. 6.

is

SERM. 18. is part of the kingdom of God, which conſiſts in peace and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*. And happy are the people that juſtify Him who laid down his life to juſtify them. *No man, ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calls Jeſus accurſed; and no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.*

1 Cor. xii. 3.

Jan. 1. 1718.

SERMON XIX.

IV. HE who is thus juſtified in the Spirit is no other than the Moſt High GOD. The name that he goes by in the firſt branch of our religion runs through the other articles, and belongs to all the great things that are ſaid of him in the text. I have ſhewn you that he could never have anſwered the end of being *manifeſt in the fleſh*, if he had not been *God over all, bleſſed for ever*. And I ſhall now conſider his Divine Nature, as it farther appears from the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt; that He who received ſuch a witneſs as this, muſt be God. Becauſe, the Spirit is what he himſelf purchaſed and deſerved; what he ſent upon his own authority: This Spirit repreſents him as equal to all the demands of God's juſtice, as the giver of all the grace that his people want; as one capable of anſwering our dependence; and as a perſon entitled to the glory of another world. Such a teſtimony as this, is too much for a creature: it is only a God who can be thus *juſtified in the Spirit*.

1. Conſider, that the Spirit who gives in this teſtimony of Chriſt, is ſent down upon the *purchaſe* made by Him. Now, who is he that could

deſerve ſo great a gift to his church? That merit SERM. 19.
did not ariſe merely from the violence of his pain, or the innocence of his perſon. Suppoſe an Angel had put on a dying nature, and made himſelf capable of enduring the croſs, what had been the proper reward to ſuch an obedience? We may imagine, that as men had put him to death, ſo his integrity would be cleared; and as God had appointed it, ſo he ſhould have a greater honour upon his return to heaven; but can it be thought that in this action he could be ſignificant enough to make a purchaſe *for others?* and that of the greateſt bleſſings that ever can be given? If ſuch an Angel was exalted to a higher degree of *perſonal* glory, it is as much as he could expect; but is it likely that we in this lower nature ſhould be ever the better for what he did?

Well, do but give a little ſcope to your meditations; conſider what Chriſt has drawn in, and collected to himſelf by dying; not only *a Name above every name*, a better eſtate than that of the Angels, but a fulneſs of grace for all his people. There are many thouſands in the different ages and countries of the world for whom he has *obtained an eternal redemption.*

And what does this ſalvation begin with, what is it aſſured by, but the gift of the Holy Spirit? Ye truſted in CHRIST, *after ye had heard the word* Eph. i. 12, 13, 14.
of truth, the Goſpel of your ſalvation; in whom alſo, after ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion to the praiſe of HIS *glory.* This is more than any creature can deſerve: The merit muſt ariſe from the dignity of the Perſon that ſuffered, becauſe it reaches not only to himſelf, but the whole body of his people; and beſides, it includes not only the common favours which they had loſt, but the greateſt bleſſing that God himſelf could give. God

reveals

SERM. 19. *reveals* by the Spirit *the things that he has prepared for them that love him: We have received not*
1 Cor. ii. 10. 12. *the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

Now, what muſt He be, whoſe blood had ſuch a value in it, that *for his ſake*, the Spirit ſhould come down from on high, to fill *his* place, to do *his* work as a deputy, and to ſhare *his* glory as a partner? The Prophet puts the queſtion ſo high,
Iſa. xl. 13. that no creature can anſwer it: *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, and who, being his counſellor, has taught him?* We may with ſtill more reaſon aſk, Who could *deſerve* this Spirit of the Lord, or have merit enough to *oblige* him? Or, to put it into the Prophet's next words, *Who has firſt given to the Lord?* No creature in heaven or in earth could pretend to the former, to *direct* that Spirit who has produced and modelled the univerſe, and as little could any *deſerve him*, or lay him under an obligation to come and do a greater taſk than making the world.

But ſuch a one there is to whom the Spirit was owing, for whoſe ſake believers ſhould have him; or, to preſerve the language of the Bible, he has
Rom. xi. 35. Gal. iv. 5, 6. *firſt given to the Lord, and therefore it ſhall be repaid him.* Here is one who has *redeemed them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of ſons;* and *becauſe they are ſons, the Spirit of the Son is ſent into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* He has done that, which makes it more than an act of bounty for the Holy Ghoſt to be ſent; it is what eternal juſtice owes him: And who is he, that could thus bargain with God, and not only deſire, but *demand* the greateſt bleſſing that he ever did give, or ever will? Chriſt has
John xiv. 16, 17. claimed all this to himſelf. *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, who ſhall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, who dwelleth*

dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you. Do but take the whole ſcheme of redemption together; conſider with care what the gift of the Spirit is; how uſeful, how glorious! and remember of *This* there was a purchaſe, *i. e.* ſomething was done of equal value to it, that fully deſerved it. Think ſeriouſly of the matter in this connexion, and the current of your meditations will have weight enough to bear down *the crackling of thorns*, and *the laughter of fools*. SERM. 19.

2. This Spirit is ſent by our Lord's authority. Sometimes he repreſents his part in ſending him as an act of interceſſion: *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter*, and there is no doubt to be made of it, but he carried to heaven with him the begging, the inferior, the depending nature; that with which, *in the days of his fleſh, he offered up prayers and ſupplications with ſtrong crying and tears.* Heb. v. 7.

But he alſo ſpeaks in a language that ſignifies a great deal more; as if it was his own doing: *If I go away, I will ſend him to you.* This was the reſult of his own greatneſs, and his return to the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. *I ſend*, ſaith he, *the promiſe of my Father upon you;* and this was *enduing them with power from on high:* It is the firſt grant that he makes from his throne: They were to be endued with power from on high, when he himſelf had received *all power both in heaven and earth.* The Angels then began to pay him their homage: For *when the Firſt-begotten was brought again into the world, it was ſaid, Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* He has alſo given proper notice of his acceſſion to that dignity, among thoſe few ſheep whom he had left in the wilderneſs: *The Spirit was not given till Jeſus was glorified.* The Scripture, by putting things into that order, lets us ſee that this is one Luke xxiv. 49. Heb. i. 6. Joh. vii. 39.

SERM. 19. conſequence of his majeſty; it comes in among the firſt fruits of his empire.

And who is great enough to make ſuch a diſpoſal, at whoſe command the eternal Spirit comes down, and goes through the mighty offices of a Sanctifier and a Comforter? This Spirit who ſhould
Joh. xvi. 13, 14. lead them into all truth, was *not to ſpeak of himſelf, but whatſoever he heard he was to ſpeak:* and ſaith Chriſt, *he ſhall glorify* ME, *for he ſhall take of* MINE *and ſhew it unto you.* We may uſe our Lord's own argument: Whether is greater, he that is ſent, or He that ſent him? certainly, he that ſent him. Now, if Jeſus had only a created nature, this is more than he could do: Men and Angels cannot
——xx. 22. give the Spirit; but he ſpeaks like a God. *He breathed on the Diſciples, ſaying, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.*

This is what none could ſay but himſelf. I do not deny, but ſome vain men have pretended to uſe thoſe words; but theirs ought to be numbered among the mouths that ſpeak blaſphemy *againſt the tabernacle of God*, and ſome of them received the due reward of their deeds. This language of Chriſt was fitted to no lips but his own. There could not be a greater crime than to ſuppoſe, that *the gift of God might be purchaſed with money.* Conſider the deſign, the nature, the myſtery of the Spirit's operations, to what purpoſes he is preſent with believers through all the dangers and duties of life, and how he carries them over death and darkneſs into the manſions above; and then remember who it is that ſends him, and you will ſoon conclude,
Pſ. lxviii. 20. 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6. that he comes from the *God of ſalvation, to whom belong the iſſues from death. There are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit; there are differences of adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord; and there are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame* GOD *who works all in all.*

3. You

3. You may farther argue the Divine Nature of our Redeemer from the teſtimony that the Spirit gives to him *in your own ſouls*, when it leads you to depend upon him for acceptance with God. I do not wonder, that they who deny his Deity, throw contempt upon his ſatisfaction. As they have *trodden under foot the Son of God, they count the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy or a common thing*; thus *denying the Lord that bought them.* It is plain they ſee no need of this atonement; they can imagine a way to happineſs without it. And from hence you may conclude, that the Spirit has not convinced them of *ſin*; he has not bound upon the conſcience all the ſeverity and terror of a righteous law. The Apoſtle was *without the law once*; though he pretended to value it, yet by that he could ſee no fault in himſelf, but brings in this verdict, that *touching the righteouſneſs of the law, he was blameleſs.* Thus was he *alive* in his own opinion; no pains or ſenſe of death gave him any trouble; but at laſt *the commandment came*, by which phraſe he muſt ſignify a great deal more than his regard to it, for that he had all along; *it came* with a new ſort of weight, for then *ſin revived, and he died.* He would no longer think himſelf blameleſs touching the righteouſneſs of the law, for the *commandment that was ordained unto life, he found to be unto death; not that that which was good in itſelf was made death to him, but ſin by the commandment appeared exceeding ſinful: for*, ſaith he, *the law is ſpiritual, but I am carnal, ſold under ſin.* Juſt ſo it will be with every one of us, when the Spirit of God does thoſe offices upon our ſouls that he is ſent into the world about, *i. e.* to convince of ſin, and righteouſneſs, and judgment. When he has convinced us of ſin, he has virtually ſtruck off all our dependence upon the creature: we dare truſt to no duties, no graces or comforts; theſe are imperfect and impure; neither

SERM. 19.

Heb. x. 29.

2 Pet. ii. 1.

Rom. viii. 9. 13, 14.

SERM. 19. ther great enough in their quantity, nor good enough in their nature. We then look to Chriſt for *righteouſneſs*, becauſe he is gone to the Father.

How ſhould his *going to the Father* make us apprehenſive of a righteouſneſs by him? It certainly proclaims the Divinity of his Perſon, that he is equal with God, and as ſuch a one, he is gone to manage the whole concern of our redemption. An infinite nature was offended in its holineſs, and engaged againſt us in its juſtice. Now, who could be fit to tranſact with him upon the head of peace and reconciliation? Job takes it for granted, that there could be no pardon, becauſe, ſaith he, *He is not a man as I am, that I ſhould come before him.* His argument turns upon this, that whoever deals with God in a treaty of ſalvation for poor loſt ſinners, muſt be upon *his* level; as great as he is, or as he is called, a *days-man between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt in coming down upon earth, proves himſelf to be *formed out of the clay*, a true repreſentation of one party; he was *made lower than the Angels for the ſuffering of death.* But now, in his *going to the Father*, we are convinced that what he did was the *righteouſneſs* in which his people are found; that
Zech. xiii. 7. the *ſword of God* has been directed *againſt the Man*
Joh xiii. 3. *who is his fellow. He knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.*

It is only in this view that an awakened conſcience can have peace. The Spirit, after he has unſettled the ſinner, and put him by his other dependencies, ſhews him a merit that will do; that though Chriſt is in the form of a ſervant, he *thinks it no robbery to be equal with God.* The ſoul regards
Jer. xxiii. 6. him as JEHOVAH *our righteouſneſs.* Deſtroy that title, and our comfort in him gives way. When
Iſa. xlv. 22. he invites *the ends of the earth to look unto him that they may be ſaved*, he gives this reaſon for the call,

this

this ground for their hope, that *he is the Lord, and there is none else.* And when the believer gives out the confidence that he has in him, it is still upon this bottom: *In the Lord shall one say, I have righteousness and strength; to him shall men come, and in him shall the seed of Israel be justified.* SERM. 19. Isa. xlv. 24, 25.

Indeed the name of *Lord*, as well as that of God, is scattered among the creatures: *There are gods many, and lords many;* but when it is used with the highest attributes, when the greatest things are affirmed of him that has it, the sense is determined. If we read of a Lord that gives us food and raiment, and protects us in our way, perhaps there is no necessity to understand so much by it: but the Lord, in whom we have *righteousness*, to appear in the presence of eternal Justice; the Lord by whom we have *strength* to encounter Satan, to go forth conquering and to conquer; He by whom *all the seed of Israel* in every country, people, tongue, and nation, in every age of the world, are to be justified and to glory, must be the LORD besides whom there is none else; for he that glories is *to glory in the Lord.*

It is supposed that He who undertook our redemption was in this respect equal to the design, because *being the brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express image of his Person, after he had by himself purged away our sins, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God.* There are four things to be observed in the gradation of that sentence. Heb. i. 3.

First, That it was not every one who could enter into the design: He that does it must be *the brightness of the Father's Glory*, and the express image of his Person. It was necessary he should have such a dignity in himself, or otherwise he had fallen beneath the undertaking. If he was not all this, it signified nothing what he could *do.*

Secondly, It was this personal merit that made the atonement. *By himself* he purged away our sins;

SERM. 19. ſins; not only as he made an offering of himſelf, but his own virtue conveyed a value to thoſe ſufferings, and made them effectual.

Thirdly, It is from both theſe conſiderations that he takes his place at the right-hand of God. He could not have gone thither, had he not been the brightneſs of his glory; and therefore, though the expreſſion of ſitting at the right-hand, does ſometimes ſignify the happineſs of a creature, what believers are capable of, it is plain *that* cannot be the meaning here: For Chriſt's taking that place is put upon the dignity of his Perſon, that he was equal to the Father; and *in that character*, as ſoon as he had done his work on earth, he went up to heaven. And therefore,

Fourthly, This muſt ſignify *that* in him, which cannot be given to a creature, becauſe the reaſons for it are peculiar to himſelf; and it is underſtood
Heb. i. 5. in ſuch a ſenſe, as makes it incommunicable; *For to which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, Sit thou at my right-hand?*

4. The Spirit leads us to Chriſt as the Giver of
Pſal. cx. 3. what we want. They are *his people* whom he *makes willing;* they worſhip *him in the beauties of*
Heb. xii. 2. *holineſs. He is the author and finiſher of faith.* He
Mat. xxviii. 20. has promiſed to be *with us to the end of the world.* This cannot be underſtood of his human nature;
Acts iii. 21. for *the heavens have received* that *till the time of the reſtitution of all things.* And therefore when he tells the Diſciples, *Yet a little while, and ye ſee me no more; and again, yet a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me;* it muſt be underſtood of two different natures, unleſs we will daſh upon a contradiction, and make one part of the ſentence deſtroy the
2 Cor. v. 16. other. They were to ſee and know him *no more after the fleſh;* whither he went they could not
John xiv. 18. come; and yet *he would ſee them again, and not leave them comfortleſs.* Nay, he tells them, that his preſence with them would be vital; ſufficient

to all the purpoſes of duty, and a full ſecurity of happineſs; *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* There was to be a communication, a vein of influence reaching from heaven to earth; a life from *him* ſtreaming down to *them.* SERM 19. John xiv. 19.

And what apprehenſions muſt we have of Him, who is the fountain of ſuch an exiſtence? Who muſt He be that makes us live over again, that gives us a *part in the firſt reſurrection?* How ſhall we find a harmony between what he ſaith to the Father, and this that he tells the Diſciples? To the Father he profeſſes, *I am no more in the world; but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee*; and yet to his people he has promiſed, *Wherever two or three are met in my name, I am in the midſt of them.* The council at Jeruſalem took knowledge of the Apoſtles, that *they had been with Jeſus:* How could that be, when he was in heaven, and they on earth? They muſt mean, either that their having been formerly with him had left impreſſions behind; or rather, that they were ſtruck with a ſenſe of ſome new converſation; they took knowledge that they had been with Jeſus. Now, who is it that could be both in heaven and earth, but He who had ſaid of himſelf to Nicodemus, that *no man had aſcended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who was then in heaven?* John xvii. 11. Mat. xviii. 20. Acts xiv. 13. John iii. 13.

All religion is the work of a God. A convert is *born, not of fleſh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God.* The author of every good and perfect gift, is the *Father of lights; of his own will does he beget us by the word of truth.* And therefore, if we have our dependence upon Chriſt for theſe things, the Spirit, in leading us to him, tells us what he *is.* The Apoſtle numbers the ſteps by which he went up to his glory; firſt, That he was raiſed by *the working of a mighty power;* then *ſet at the right-hand of God, Angels and principalities and* — i. 13. Jam. i. 17, 18. Eph. i 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

SERM. 19. *and dominions being made ſubject to him;* and then appointed to be *Head over all things unto the Church.* Now, how can he be equal to this relation, if he is no more than a creature? For *the Church is his body*, which he not only guides, but animates. He is the Head, from which an influence comes that exceeds all the courſes of nature; and therefore he muſt have *the fulneſs of him, who fills all in all.* As the conſequence and argument of ſuch a
Eph. ii. 1. capacity, he *quickens thoſe who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* This quickening is the ſame with *working faith in them;* and that was by ſuch *an exceeding greatneſs of his power*, as could be equalled by nothing but his own reſurrection. Now, who
Rom. iv. 17. is it that *quickens the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they were?* This act of converſion is all along made to be as great as a reſurrection; and therefore if a Divine power is neceſſary for the one, it muſt be ſo for the other.

Abraham's faith was acting a great part, when he believed in God that raiſes the dead. And what muſt the Spirit teach us to think of a Redeemer, when we are led to him as the Author of grace? when he puts us into a ſtate of perpetual derivation from him, that the whole body being thus maintained, may *increaſe with the increaſe of God?* Can this be, if they do not increaſe with the gifts of a God? It is for this reaſon that the words are uſed promiſcuouſly; ſometimes we are
Jude 1. ſaid to be *called of God*, and ſometimes *preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus, and called.* We are *the workmanſhip of God*, and yet are *created anew in Chriſt Jeſus.* Our religion is a renewal of us into the image of him that created us. *God dwells in us, and we in him*, ſaith the Apoſtle John. *I will be in you, and you in me*, ſaith Chriſt himſelf. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Chriſt are ſpoken of under the ſame attributes. The Scripture uſes either of the expreſſions, as meaning but one thing.

And

And can we think that a creature must have his name used in common with God, who is at an infinite distance from every work of his hand, whatever glory he has imparted to it? Why should the Apostle talk, in the same breath, of two such distant natures, and observe no guard or modesty in his transition from the one to the other? *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of* GOD *dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of* CHRIST, *he is none of his; and if* CHRIST *be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of* HIM *who raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you,* HE *that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* SERM. 19. Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11.

5. The Spirit leads us to Christ, as one that can answer all our dependence upon him. *There is no salvation in another, nor any other name given under heaven among men, whereby we shall be saved.* After the soul is quickened, we are to live upon him. The same hand that *began the good work*, is to carry it on and *perform* it. As we say that Providence is a continued creation, so the preserving of our faith and hope and love, is the work of him who implanted them. He is the *author*, and we look to him as the *finisher*, of our faith. Acts iv. 12. Phil. i. 6.

And who can this be but the Almighty? The Apostle tells us, that no less than a *divine* nature can secure salvation to the *human*. See how things are joined together, and how little room there is for any inglorious distinction between *Him that sits on the throne and the Lamb. We pray for you,* saith he, *that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

SERM. 19. There is a great deal of pains taken to ſhew, that the Scripture has never attributed the work of creation to a Redeemer; and there muſt be a great deal more, before they are able to caſt a cloud upon the evidence we have for it. But if there is any doubt about *that*, here is a much greater work, and which is apparently Divine, that claims Him as an Author. And would *that* God, whoſe name is *Jealous*, ſuffer thoſe actions that are his chief glory, to be mentioned as belonging to a creature?
2 Cor. v. 5. Certainly *he that has wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God.* Our preſervation is aſcribed to a Redeemer, and yet we can depend upon no leſs than
1 Pet. i. 5. *the grace of God*, that ſhall keep us *through faith*
John xvii. 11. *unto ſalvation.* Our Saviour begs, *Father, keep through thine own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me.* And yet this is the very thing that he promiſes upon the foundation of his own authority;
Ch. x. 28, 29, 30. *They are my ſheep, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand.* And though he adds, *My Father who gave them me is greater than all, and none ſhall pluck them out of my Father's hand;* yet he does not ſay this to contradict his own equality with God: He immediately retrieves what ſome people deſire ſhould be loſt, that *he and his Father are one:* And if he did not mean by it what the words do plainly import,
ver. 33. there was no occaſion for the Jews to *take up ſtones*, and charge him with *blaſphemy, becauſe that he being a man had made himſelf God.* For though he tells them that ſome in their law were called
—— 35. *gods*, yet he diſtinguiſhed himſelf from them;
36, 37. they were people *to whom the word of God came*, creatures, ſubjects, and dependents; but he was *ſanctified, and ſent into the world.* He does not claim the title by virtue of an office, but faith, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* It was not for doing any good works, that their kings were called *gods*, but merely on the account of their

their ſtation; but he avows himſelf to be a God, as doing *the works of the Father.* Not becauſe the Father had appointed them, for that every good man, and eſpecially every Prophet, might have ſaid; but ſuch as none but the Father could do: *Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe,* What? that he is commiſſioned and ſent into the world? No; but that *he is in the Father, and the Father in him.* SERM. 19. John x. 38.

Thus the Spirit leads us to a dependence upon him, for that which none but a God can do. *We look for the mercy of the Lord Jeſus unto eternal life.* Now, it is certain, *power belongs unto God, alſo unto him belongs mercy;* and *the gift of God is eternal life.* And therefore when he had directed us to look to Chriſt, he concludes with a doxology that tells us who he is: *Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before his glory with exceeding joy,* (theſe works are frequently attributed to Chriſt, he will *preſent the Church to himſelf;* and yet He who is capable of doing this is) *the only wiſe God our Saviour; to whom be glory, majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.* Jude 21. Pſal. lxii. 11, 12. Rom. vi. 22. Jude 24, 25. Eph. v. 27.

6. The Spirit leads us to him, as one entitled to all the glory of another world. *I overcame,* ſaith he, *and am ſat down with my Father upon his throne.* He ſhall glorify me; for he ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you. ALL *that the Father has is mine, and therefore I ſaid, He ſhall take of mine; q. d.* I ſpeak of that fulneſs that I have equally with the Father. He went up *far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* This is not ſpeaking of him as a creature. What ſhuffling and mingling of ſenſes is there, when we talk of the worſhip that was given him on earth! and yet the Scripture makes no difference between what is paid to the Father and to him, in heaven. Can *every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under* Rev. iii. 21. Eph. iv. 10. Rev. v. 13.

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SERM. 19 *the earth, and in the sea*, do any more than say, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be to him that sits on the throne?* and yet the same do they ascribe *unto the Lamb for ever.* Is there any more in the first part of the song of Moses and the Rev. xv. 3. Lamb, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty*, then there is in the last, *Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints?* Thus he that is justified in the Spirit appears to be God; but nevertheless this is a MYSTERY *that man's wisdom teaches not.*

Jan. 18. 1718-19.

SERMON XX.

V. THIS, as well as the former branch of our religion, comes within the character that is given of the whole, that it is *a mystery of Godliness;* which I shall consider in both the parts of it: First, Shew that it is a *mystery*, and only to be understood by the light that comes from above; and, secondly, That it prepares and leads to *godliness;* it animates and guides our practice, and helps us to *do* God's *will*, as well as to receive his *word.*

1st, It is a thing MYSTERIOUS in its own nature, that He who was manifest in the flesh should be *justified in the Spirit.* There is a great deal that human reason will have to object against it; nor can it be known any other way, than by the revelation that God has given us in his word. From those writings alone shall I endeavour to lay it before you; for I am sure *that Book* is our only rule,

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in following the work of the Spirit upon the souls of men; the descriptions we meet with in the Bible have their counterpart in the experience of a believer. *You obey from the heart the form of doctrine, εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε, into which you are delivered.* Rom. vi. 17. SERM. 20.

Now, that the great Saviour of the world should be *justified in the Spirit* is a *mystery*, as you will see by the consideration of these particulars. 1. It is strange that he should *carry on* his design by dying, which seems to be the way of *losing* it. 2. It is mysterious that he should be *owned* by the Father at the time that we thought him *forsaken*. 3. It is more a wonder that the thing which seemed to *hinder* the faith of men, should afterwards *encourage* it. 4. It is again a mystery, that he who appeared at his death as if he was entirely in the enemies hands, should so soon after declare *his own power* at the resurrection. 5. The manner of the Spirit's justifying him in the soul that was filled with *prejudice* against him, is very mysterious. 6. The success of this work in the heart of a believer, its *victory* over all opposition, and its *perseverance* to the end, makes another part of this wonder.

1. One testimony given to our blessed Lord was concerning his death; and you may look upon it as a mystery, that he should take such a way to carry on his design, as all mankind imagined would be fatal to it. *The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;* and yet *the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.* 1 Cor. i. 25. He appears as the Captain of our salvation. As God laid help upon him, so we are told that *he is mighty to save.* Though he was promised as the *seed of the woman* in the early voice of the Gospel, to signify the weakness and frailty of the nature that he took upon him; yet it was then affirmed, that he should *break the serpent's head.* Gen. iii. 15. And what could we expect from such a promise, but

SERM. 20. but that he would make the clouds his chariot, and come attended with the armies of heaven, that it
Pſ. xcvi. 6. might be ſaid, as it uſed to be, *Honour and majeſty are before him, ſtrength and beauty are in his ſanc-*
Iſa. lix. 17. *tuary?* that he ſhould *put on righteouſneſs as a breaſt-plate, and a helmet of ſalvation upon his head, the garments of vengeance for clothing, and be clad with zeal as a cloke?*

Heb. ii. 14, 15. But when he became *in all things like unto his brethren*, it was, *that through death he might ſubdue him that has the power of death, that is, the devil; and ſo deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime ſubject to bondage.* The reſcue that he determined to give his people from their greateſt enemy and their darkeſt fears, was noble, divine, and worthy of himſelf; but the *way* that he took to do it is what no wiſdom of man would have found out: That falling by Satan ſhould be triumphing over him, that loſing his forces ſhould be getting the battle, is a ſtrange way of conquering. It is ſaid of the devil, that *he had the power of death;* and if a Redeemer was ſtronger than he, we ſhould have thought he would ſpoil his armour, and take from him that wherein he truſted, and let it be ſeen that he ſhould no longer have the command of ſuch an important evil: And therefore, if in this battle, he that undertook to deliver *us* ſhould not be able to ſave *himſelf*, we could have nothing to admire in him but his good wiſhes, and bewail the miſcarriage of a gracious purpoſe. Upon his own dying we muſt conclude, that he who had the power of death had obtained power over *him;* nor does he ſeem to deny it, as he ſaith to the Jews, *This is your hour, and the power of darkneſs; i. e.* now the combination of hell and earth againſt me will ſucceed.

And yet by falling he conquered, by dying he lived, and gave ſucceſs to the great deſign which his

his enemies thought was loſt; for though *he was crucified through weakneſs, yet he lives by the power of God.* It is thus that he delivered his people, not only from their real danger, but the terrible apprehenſions they have of it, that *fear of death through which they are all their lifetime ſubject to bondage.* This he did by his own death. It is ſtrange, that *his* dying under ſo much darkneſs and horror, ſhould be a means to make it eaſier for *us;* that becauſe he cried after a departed God, and bore the weight of an avenging law, our fears ſhould therefore be over; and yet *in this* he is juſtified by the Spirit. The ways he took to bring about the great ſalvation were rightly choſen, and effectual to all the benefits that he had in his view: *For this cauſe he is the Mediator of the New Teſtament, that by means of death they who are called may receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance.* SERM. 20. Heb. ix. 15.

2. It is a myſtery that he ſhould be owned by the Father, at the ſame time that he thought himſelf forſaken. It uſed to ſupport him under all the ſufferings of life, that *he who ſent him was with him, the Father had not left him alone.* So he could tell his Diſciples, *The hour comes when ye ſhall be ſcattered every man to his own, and leave me alone; yet am I not alone, but the Father that ſent me is with me.* He could ſay over the grave of Lazarus, *I thank thee that thou haſt heard me, and I know that thou heareſt me always.* But this Divine preſence, or at leaſt the delightful ſenſations that attended it; this that had been his perpetual ſecurity, was to fail him at laſt; and he who had ſo often profeſſed his aſſurance of the Father's care, muſt cry out upon the croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* John viii. 29. —— xvi. 32. —— xi. 41, 42.

The paſſage is taken out of the 22d Pſalm, which is directed to the chief muſician upon *Aijeleth Shahar, i. e.* the hind of the morning; and it ſeems to bear this alluſion, that the perſon whoſe miſeries

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SERM. 20. are there described was like a chased hart, almost run down, gasping, fainting, without any dawn of help from the whole creation. Like a creature so dead-run does he represent his own case: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* The compellation is very moving: he pleads a propriety in God; he repeats it, My God, my God; *q. d.* I am certainly Thine, and more Thine than any one else can be, and yet Thou hast forsaken me. The Psalmist pursues the meditation: *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry unto thee in the day-time, and thou hearest not, and in the night-season I am not silent.* As the lamentation stands here at large, we must take it for the anguish of his soul, under a sense of the Father's departure from him: and by the vehemence with which it is repeated, we may suppose it continued for some time.

Psal. xxii. 1, 2,

And yet, *even then*, the Father did own him in the most effectual way; that is, he received the offering that Christ made of himself. He was then *a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour:* he had *a joy set before him:* there was a Divine influence upon every groan: *for through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God.* Here then is a mystery, that the Father should be present with him, when himself complains that he had forsaken him. Had God indeed withdrawn from him, and not accepted an offering at his hand, all those torments had been in vain, and the blood of the covenant proved no better than *an unholy thing.* But in the hour of his distress, when *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief,* he was then the dearest to Divine Justice; as by those agonies he brought in a righteousness for his own glory, and our acceptance. He was then doing the most desirable service to the holiness of God, shedding a blood that should purify heaven itself, and make ready a numerous people to inhabit it: *The heaven-*

Eph. v. 2. Heb. xii. 2. —ix. 14.

Isa. liii. 10.

Heb. ix. 23.

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ly things themſelves were purified with this better ſa- SERM. 20.
crifice; and *through the blood of the everlaſting co-* Heb. xiii.
venant, was the great Shepherd of the ſheep brought 20.
again from the dead.

3. Another myſtery is this, that the very thing which ſeemed to hinder the faith of men, ſhould afterwards encourage it: I mean, the death of our bleſſed Lord. Whenever he ſpoke of this, though at a diſtance, there went off a great ſhoal of proſelytes; nay, the very Twelve uſed to be ſhocked at it. They rebuked him for it, they mourned over it, *ſorrow filled their hearts*, and became unweildy Joh. xvi. 6.
to them. When the time came on that he muſt be delivered up, they forſook him, and fled away. They could not endure the thoughts of the croſs: *All of them were offended becauſe of him that night;* Mat. xxvi.
the Shepherd was ſmitten, and the ſheep of the flock 31.
ſcattered abroad. And would not every one imagine that a circumſtance ſo frightful beforehand, ſhould be ſcandalous afterwards? that they would never allow themſelves to remember the vile way in which their Saviour died?

But inſtead of that, they make no ſecret of it; they mention the ill uſage he had from the Jews with ſatisfaction: *The offence of the croſs had ceaſed.* It is obſerved, that as he *ſhewed them his hands and* Joh. xx. 20.
his ſide, then were the Diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord. And though Thomas did not believe, yet his unbelief turns quite another way than it uſed to do. He is ſo far from being terrified with the thoughts of our Lord's dying upon the croſs, that he rather makes it a condition: *Except I ſee* ver. 25.
the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe. And the reſt made no ſecret of it, that their *chief prieſts and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death.* Might it not have been expected, that the Jews would give out *that* as a reproach to the whole party, Theſe are the diſciples of him that was crucified; and inſult their

SERM. 30. faith with the ſcandalous death of their Maſter? And the people who were afraid to ſee him die, could not be the moſt prepared to ſtand this banter. But it proved quite otherwiſe with them: they
Acts v. 30. owned all this in their argument: *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree.* Before this, their eyes were blinded; they could not ſee that ſuch a form of death was deſcribed in any of the Prophets: but it was no longer a ſtumbling-block to them after the reſurrection, as Paul and Barnabas told the Jews at An-
——xiii. tioch: *They that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their ru-*
27, 28, 29. *lers, becauſe they knew not him, nor yet the voices of the Prophets that are read every ſabbath-day, have fulfilled them in condemning him: And though they found no cauſe of death in him, yet deſired they Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a ſepulchre.*

This was ſo far from being the matter of their concern or ſhame, that the Apoſtle tells the Corin-
1 Cor. ii. 2. thians, *he determined to know nothing among them ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.* And as to his
Gal. vi. 14. own practice, he durſt not *glory in any thing but the croſs of Chriſt, whereby the world was crucified to him, and he to the world.* This preaching of the croſs was *to them that periſh fooliſhneſs.* The Jews made it *a ſtumbling-block*, and the Greeks enter-
1 Cor. i. 24. tained it with contempt; but *to them that are ſaved, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt*, as ſo crucified, was *the wiſdom of God, and the power of God.* You will eaſily conceive, that when they uſed to tell mankind of a Redeemer who was capable of ſaving them, and gave them a long account of the miracles that he wrought, and eſpecially when they themſelves did wonders in his name, it would raiſe the expectations of the people: But when they came to that part of the ſtory, that this Almighty Lord was crucified, that He who brings others to glory,

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fell himſelf with ſhame and torment, it could not fail to ſtartle all that heard it. We ſhould have thought that branch of the report had better have been left out. SERM. 20.

But it was *this* that drew ſuch vaſt numbers after him. Nicodemus was a diſciple of Jeſus, but he durſt not make a public profeſſion. That which brought him firſt to our Lord, was the miracles that he wrought: *No man can do the things that thou doeſt, except God be with him.* Now, who could think that ſuch a one ſhould take courage at the death of Chriſt? and yet he comes with a great proviſion of ſweet ſpices to anoint his body. Nay, Joſeph of Arimathea, who was *a diſciple ſecretly for fear of the Jews*, begins to open his profeſſion when we ſhould have thought it was time to cloſe it: *He went boldly to Pilate, and begged the body, and put it into his own new tomb.* The Scripture was indeed fulfilled, that the Shepherd ſhould be ſmitten, and the ſheep ſcattered; and ſo they were for a time: but thoſe fears gave way, and that little flock that uſed to run as far as they could from danger, now can meet it all. *They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name, and daily in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and to preach Jeſus Chriſt.* Joh. iii. 2. —xix. 38, 39. Acts v. 41, 42.

4. It is ſtill further a myſtery that he who appeared at his death, as if he was entirely in the enemies hands, ſhould ſoon after declare *his own power* at the reſurrection. They took him and hauled him from one to another; from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod to Pilate. He is abuſed by the ſoldiers, inſulted by the rabble, and purſued with a charge of capital crimes by the prieſts: they put upon him what veſture they pleaſe, and make a jeſt of his authority by the purple robe: they expoſe him by a crown of thorns: they lay upon him the whole weight of his croſs, which was a burden too heavy for him to bear: they nailed

SERM. 20. nailed him to it, *they pierced his hands and his feet;* and it seems altogether at their own choice, whether they will break his bones or no. Though there was a secret design of God which protected him from that, yet it is more than they knew. They give him vinegar to drink; they open his side with a spear; and, in short, do what they please. Never did a person seem to be less at his own dispo-
Ps. xxii. 6. Isa. liii. 7. sal; *a worm, and no man. He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.* They took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre, saith the Apostle, *i. e.* Pilate gave leave for Joseph to do it; and yet after this, he made it very evident they had no more to do with him.

Now, who could believe it of a person so helpless and passive, that in the space of three days no guards could secure him? that He who had never an Angel to protect him from death, should have
Acts ii. 24. their united assistance at the resurrection? *He loosed the pains of death, it not being possible that he should be holden of it.* How is this conceivable of one that died? Why *could not* he lie in the grave, who had already suffered on the cross? Why must not that body *see corruption* which had felt the sorrows of death? We should have thought that *preventing* those pains of death would have declared his majesty more than *loosing* them afterwards. The Jews began to mutter a peevish argument upon La-
John xi. 37. zarus's death: *Why could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?* And such sort of thoughts are apt to rise in the carnal mind: Why was there so very little of his power shewn before, and so much afterwards?

Now, the Spirit makes this mystery sit easy upon the believer: We are convinced, that such a forlorn and helpless way of dying, answered the great atonement that he was to make; and that it became

became him, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, to be *declared the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness, in the resurrection from the dead.* It is evident from the whole, that the contrivance is all Divine. *We* should never have laid matters together that way, but made his majesty more uniform and continued. However, thus *it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through his sufferings.* SERM. 20. Rom. i. 4. Heb. ii. 10.

5. The manner of the Spirit's justifying Christ in a soul that was filled with prejudice against him, is very mysterious. The Apostle has observed with a great deal of justice, that by nature we are *children of wrath,* as appears by our having *a conversation among them, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind.* These lusts of the mind are what he calls in another place *strong holds, and imaginations, and high thoughts, that exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ.* Our Saviour intimates the difficulty of the case, when he saith, *Blessed is he whoever shall not be offended in me.* He knew that as Satan was his enemy, so there was a great deal that he both might and would throw into the imaginations of the world. We may say, *Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* The carnal mind is most certainly *enmity against God,* and does not know the things of God; nay they are *foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned.* It is no wonder if our *Gospel be hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not.* Eph. ii. 3. 2 Cor. x. 5. Mat. xi. 6. Isa. liii. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

And what is it that gives the ministers of the word success, and makes them a savour of God in them that believe? I answer, *God makes us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Our sufficiency is of him;* but how shall —— iii. 6, 7.

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SERM. 20. we describe it? Is it not mysterious that all those reasonings which seem so very strong and clear, are gone as the morning cloud, and licked up as the early dew? and *that* not in the way that we should have expected? Perhaps an unbeliever stands it out against the most powerful arguments; none of these can reach him; and yet at last he falls, as Ahab did, by a bow drawn at a venture, and an arrow that comes in at the joints of the harness, without any aim in him that shot it.

Thus we have sometimes known, that a plain practical sermon has done more to convince a soul of revealed religion, than all the disputations that have been laboured with art and zeal. You will seldom meet with an argument better turned than that which the poor man used when our Lord had given him his sight, and yet we do not find that it did any manner of good. When the Pharisees
Joh. ix. 24, tell him, that this Jesus is *a sinner*, he puts by that
25. blow, *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see.*
ver. 29, 30. They rally him again: *We know that God spake to Moses, as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is:* And his answer is as short: *Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he has opened my eyes.* But notwithstanding the clearness of the argument, and the honest way that the poor man had of working it, there is never a Pharisee convinced, nor are his own parents persuaded; for the fear of excommunication makes them not dare tell a plain story, how their son who was born blind came now to see.

And yet we find what a run the conviction had afterwards, when we should have thought it was too late to expect any thing of that nature. At the day of Pentecost the Spirit is poured out. Peter
Acts ii. 22. explains that dispensation; tells them that *Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by signs, and miracles, and wonders, that God did by him*

him in the midst of them, as they also knew. He then goes on with an account of his resurrection, and concludes upon the whole, *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, has God made both Lord and Christ.* Now, though this is no more than what they might have been told several times, yet it is like the rising of the sun, all darkness flies before it. And the change begins in the conscience. It was not merely the removing of a mistake, or an error, but they speak of it as a practical matter: *They were pricked in their hearts, and said to Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Thus the Spirit convinced them of *sin*, because they believed not in Christ. These proselytes are worth having; and if the work does not take hold here, it signifies nothing. There is a great deal of difference between a man's being able to prove the Divine Nature and credentials of a Messiah, and his coming to him as his own Saviour. That was the case with these Jews: *They gladly received the word and were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.*

SERM. 20.
Acts ii. 36.
— 37.
— 41.

And so it is in our day; there needs no more to remove the arguments that are brought against the Christian religion, than for people to be awakened into a concern about eternity. The complaint against the Apostles at Philippi was, *That these men being Jews, did exceedingly trouble the city;* but when the jailor cries out, *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* they bid him *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* He that feels the corruption of his nature, and knows himself to be undone, will no longer make a jest of being found in the righteousness of another. The method of justification by faith, may well be the contempt of those who know no danger from sin; it is like sending a physician to a man in health. But all the critical learning, the

Acts xvi. 20.
ver. 30, 31. 34.

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SERM. 20. nice reaſoning, the free ways of thinking, make room when conſcience tells the ſoul that He who ſaves him is JEHOVAH our righteouſneſs. It will be with them as it was with the Apoſtle, *The things that were gain to me, I found to be loſs; yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt.* I do count them but σκύβαλα, dogs-meat, fitter for them than for me: He had loſt his taſte and reliſh of that which he uſed to admire. This will be more evident from the next head.

Phil. iii. 7, 8.

6. The ſucceſs of this work in the heart of a believer: When the Spirit has juſtified Chriſt in the manner I have told you, the conviction proclaims itſelf; it is like the ſun that appears in its own evidence: *The God of hope fills them with all joy and hope in believing.* This is a myſtery to the Chriſtian himſelf, and may well be ſo to others. He knows not how to believe the very change that he feels. It is like ſeed in the ground, which, *whilſt the man ſleeps and riſes night and day, ſprings and grows up he knows not how.* Here is no force upon his will, and yet he feels ſomething that is irreſiſtible, a day of *God's power.* He is *drawn*, and yet he *runs.* Here is a neceſſity upon him, but you muſt not ſay he is dragged along with it. He makes a free choice, he *would not* do otherwiſe, and yet in ſome ſenſe, he *cannot* do otherwiſe.

Rom. xv. 13.

Mar. iv. 26, 27.

Pſal. cx. 3.

Cant. i. 4.

How ſoon was the turn given to Saul? he cries out, *Who art thou, Lord?* and preſently after, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Here is no time taken to unravel the prejudice that was ſo entangled. He had *profited in the Jewiſh religion above many his equals in his own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers; but when it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the Gentiles, he conferred*

Acts ix. 5, 6.

Gal. i. 14, 15, 16.

ferred not with flesh and blood. We should have thought, there must have been a gradual recovery to shew him, here a little and there a little, the mistake of his former arguments. He must see by degrees, that the Messiah was to come out of Nazareth, and not have an earthly power. Now, this is done all at once; all the lectures of the Pharisees are answered in a moment: *They that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he who destroyed them that called on this name at Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?* This remark they make upon his preaching straitway in the synagogues, that *Christ is the Son of God:* nay, the work was a mystery to the Disciples themselves, first at Damascus, and afterwards at Jerusalem; for, saith he, *I was unknown by face unto the churches at Judea that were in Christ, only they heard that he who persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith that he once destroyed, and they glorified God in me.* SERM. 20. Acts ix. 21. Gal. i. 21, 22, 23, 24.

You may take a short APPLICATION of what you have heard.

1. If the justification of Christ in the Spirit is such a mystery, it is no wonder that the honour of our Lord is so much struck at: *No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.* And therefore when we see men *do despite to the Spirit of grace*, when they take all the pains they can to stifle every thought of practical religion, when they represent the fears of persons about their own salvation as so many whims, and the comforts of the Spirit as a delusion; in a word, when they give up themselves to sensuality, and treat with scorn those that will not run to the same excess of riot, these are enemies to the Holy Ghost, and in open war against him. And is it likely that he should teach those persons the *doctrines* of religion, who would never learn of him the *practice?* How 1 Cor. xii. 3.

SERM. 20. ſhould it be thought that a drunkard, a ſabbath-breaker, or one that *wanders out of the way of underſtanding*, is taught of God? Now, is it likely that men who live as without a God in the world, with no prayer in their families, no converſation with their Bibles, ſhould be the beſt maſters of argument about the deep myſteries of godlineſs? To ſuppoſe that God makes them wiſe, is to ſuppoſe that he ſteps out of his way, and works without the uſe of means, that he imparts of his treaſures to an enemy, and furniſhes a weapon againſt himſelf: no, he rather gives over thoſe, that *do not like to retain him in their knowledge, to a reprobate mind. To the unbelieving nothing is pure, but the mind and conſcience are defiled. They profeſs to know God, but in works deny him, being abominable, diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* When perſons are more in Saul's firſt inquiry, *Who art thou, Lord?* than in the ſecond, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* there is not much to be expected from ſuch as theſe; and to imagine that the truth is in their ſouls, is to ſuppoſe that God throws his pearls into a dunghil. We are told of *mockers, who walk after their own ungodly luſts: Theſe be they that ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, and having not the Spirit.*

Rom. i. 28. Tit. i. 15, 16. Jude 18, 19.

2. This ſhews us how vain all the ways of promoting the knowledge of Chriſt will be, that are not agreeable to the Spirit. We may ſee how little can be expected in defence of the doctrine, from a party of men who have done all they could to abuſe the work of the Spirit, both in the ordinances of the Goſpel, and the ſouls of believers. Though *praying by the Spirit* is ſo often mentioned in Scripture, yet the language is become a jeſt, and a man will be laughed at if he does but name it; and this not only by a noiſy multitude, but ſuch as pretend to know better. And are theſe the men from whom we are to have the truth as it is in Jeſus?

ſus? who have ſet up their own fancies above the divine inſtitutions, and lay as great a weight upon an opinion that never was revealed, as they can upon that which is? of which we have a notorious inſtance in an author, who in his book againſt the deiſts, proves that Jeſus muſt be the Meſſiah from the miracles that he wrought, and that theſe were done in a public way, and that our evidence of this is by a ſucceſſion of Biſhops from the Apoſtles; which is laying the moſt important affair upon the greateſt uncertainty in the world. SERM. 20.

SERMON XXI.

Feb. 2. 1718-19.

2*d*, THIS branch of our religion is proper to animate the whole duty of life. When He who was manifeſt in the fleſh is juſtified in the Spirit, when God reveals his Son in us as an all-ſufficient Saviour, it does not only fill us with a holy wonder, but it makes us abound in the work of the Lord: *We follow after, that we may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* Phil. iii. 12.

You will ſee that it is *a myſtery of* GODLINESS, by conſidering the influence it has upon the following principles: Our reverence to God, our care to pleaſe him, the humble thoughts we ſhould have of ourſelves, our charity to others, the peace and hope that runs through our lives, and our preparation for a dying hour. Theſe are the chief articles of practical piety, and whatever promotes them

SERM. 21. them muſt be of the beſt importance. Now, you will find *that* teſtimony which the Holy Spirit gives in our ſouls to the character, the capacity and goodneſs of a Redeemer, will do us ſervice in all the variety that I have mentioned.

1. By this we learn to approach with reverence to Him with whom we have to do. This is a tribute to God's majeſty; but yet it has the beſt directions from his goodneſs; nor can it be maintained without ſome hopes of an intereſt in him,
Pſ. cxxx. 4. and a conviction of *the forgiveneſs* and mercy that is *with him.* The devils have it not; they behold
Pſ. xc. 11. and feel his greatneſs, and *the power of his anger; for according to his fear, ſo is his wrath;* but this
Jam. ii. 19. is no devotional temper. Though they *believe and tremble,* they cannot come before him with the ſpirit of ſons; and therefore the fear that the people of God are conducted by, is diſtinguiſhed from
Heb. xii. 28, 29. theirs. It is called *a godly fear;* and the ground upon which it is raiſed, is a covenant where the devils have no lot or portion: *We, having received a kingdom that cannot be moved, have grace to ſerve God acceptably with reverence and a godly fear, for our God is a conſuming fire.* Where you find by the turn of the argument, that though the religion of a good man falls under the influence of God's majeſty, and looks upon him *as a conſuming fire,* yet at the ſame time it is enlivened by the thoughts of what his mercy has done in and through a Re-
Heb. iv. 13, 14. deemer. Thus the Apoſtle argues, that *all things are naked, and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great High Prieſt that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, let us hold faſt our profeſſion.* When the Holy Spirit does his office in glorifying the Son, by taking of *his,* and ſhewing them unto us, he commands every looſe and idle thought. This being the King who ſits upon the holy hill of Zion,

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we are to *ſerve him with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* SERM. 21. Pſal. ii. 6. 11.

Though it is a common objection againſt the doctrine of free grace, that it teaches people an unbecoming boldneſs to their Maker; yet I believe the experience of every Chriſtian tells him quite the contrary. *There is forgiveneſs with thee,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *that thou mayeſt be feared.* God never appeared ſo great to his ſoul, as when the view was taken under that character: *With the Lord there is mercy, and with our God is plenteous redemption.* So it is promiſed, when a Redeemer comes to be better known, that *the children of* Hoſ. iii. 5. *Iſrael ſhould ſeek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they ſhall fear the Lord, and his goodneſs in the latter days.* It is apparent to all obſervation, that they who are *ſtrangers to the com-* Eph. ii. 12. *monwealth of Iſrael, and aliens to the covenant of promiſe, who have no hope,* are perſons that live as *without a God in the world.*

Now, the reverence that fills our minds to Him whoſe we are, and whom we ſerve, comes by faith in a Saviour: *We call on the Father, who without* 1 Pet. i. 17, 18, 19. *reſpect of perſons judges according to every man's work, and ſo paſs the time of our ſojourning here in fear: foraſmuch as we know that our redemption is by the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot.* You ſee in what method the work goes on, Pſal. lxxxix. 1. *I will ſing of the faithfulneſs of the Lord: I ſaid, Mercy ſhall be* ver. 2. *built up for ever; thy faithfulneſs haſt thou eſtabliſhed in the very heavens;* and from hence we conclude, that *great fear is due to the Lord in the aſ-* —— 7. *ſembly of his Saints, and he is to be had in reverence of thoſe that are about him.*

How different was the temper of Saul, after Chriſt had revealed himſelf to him, from what it had been before! and yet he never lived looſe from all profeſſions of duty, as you may ſafely imagine, becauſe

SERM. 21. becauſe he was blameleſs touching the righteouſneſs that is in the law. But when he found the neceſſity of looking to God in and through a Re-
Acts ix. 6. deemer, he ſtood *trembling and aſtoniſhed;* his heart was more bowed to the Divine will than ever it had been. And indeed there are no diſcoveries in which the greatneſs of a God does more appear than thoſe that belong to our ſalvation. When Iſaiah ſaw the glory of a Redeemer, and ſpake of
Iſa. vi. 1, 2. 4. him as *ſitting upon a throne high and lifted up, with his train filling the temple; the houſe was clouded with ſmoke, the poſts of the door did ſhake at the voice of him that ſpake.* And the Prophet himſelf, who muſt be glad at the viſion, is yet borne down with the magnificence of the mercy, and cries out,
—— 5. *Woe is me, for I am undone!* He cries out Undone, at the ſight of that which ſaved him. It is not the language of deſpair; the only meaning of the words is, that the glory of the deſign was too much for him. There was ſomething ſo great in this revelation of the Divine mercy, that it makes him more apprehenſive than he ever had been, that he was *a man of unclean lips.* What was it that he ſaw of a Saviour then? for the Evangeliſt tells us,
John xii. 41. that *he ſaw* HIS *glory, and ſpake of* HIM. Under what title? that which belongs to none but the Moſt High, *the King, the Lord of Hoſts.*

And ſo it will be with us. We cannot believe the ſufficiency of a Mediator to ſave us, but at that very moment we are aſtoniſhed at his perfections:
Pſ. lxxxix. 8. *O Lord of hoſts, who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulneſs round about thee?* As Jacob in his dream or viſion ſaw *a ladder* that kept the correſpondence open between earth and heaven, *the Lord* Redeemer was *at the top of it,* and tells him what concerned his happineſs rather than his
Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. 15. devotion: *I am the God of thy father, and will give thee the land whereon thou lieſt: I will be with thee in the way that thou goeſt, and will bring thee back*

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in peace. He is ſtruck with the diſcovery, and feels other impreſſions beſides thoſe of joy: *How fearful is this place! Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not: This is no other than the houſe of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* SERM. 21. Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

2. If God is juſtified in our ſpirits, it will fill us with a care to pleaſe him. It is very hard for me to ſet thoſe bounds that ſome people ſpeak of, between the duty that is owing to the Father, and that which is claimed by the Son. If the one is only a creature, no brightneſs or perfection can make his diſtance from the other any leſs than infinite; and therefore he is by no means to have the homage that is due alone to the Divine Nature. Such a worſhip as that, would be idolatry. May we not therefore look for plain diſtinctions to ſettle our carriage to the Father and the Son, that the Goſpel may not betray us into that very crime that was ſo abominable under the Law? The God who is ſo jealous of his honour, and told his people that they ſhould not bow down to *the likeneſs of any thing in heaven or earth, or under the earth;* that they ſhould have *no other God before him;* has certainly left us under no ſnare, by any unguarded direction in the New Teſtament. One of the laſt orders there, is from the Angel who would not ſuffer the Apoſtle to fall down before him, but bids him *worſhip God.* Rev. xxii. 9.

Sometimes indeed God joins himſelf with another, and tells us, in the ſame word, of the duty that we owe to both; but there the caſe is ſo plain, that we are in no danger of miſtaking. As when it is ſaid, the children of Iſrael *believed the Lord and his ſervant Moſes*, we muſt of neceſſity underſtand it of a different faith. So when David ſaith to Abigail, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who ſent thee this day to meet me; and bleſſed be thy advice, and bleſſed be thou:* though he uſes the ſame word in all the three parts of his declaration, yet Exod. xiv. 31. 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

SERM. 21. it cannot poſſibly be taken in leſs than three ſenſes.
Prov. xxiv. 21. So again, when we are bid to *fear the Lord and the king*, can any mortal ſuppoſe it is with the ſame fear? Indeed I ſhould not have mentioned this text as an inſtance, becauſe it has ſuffered by the blaſphemous cant of mercenary tongues, who have made a horrid proſtitution of their miniſterial character. The Apoſtle ſaith of the Macedonians,
2 Cor. viii. 5. that they *gave up themſelves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God.* The expreſſion muſt have two meanings.—In theſe places, and ſeveral others, the ſame word is to be taken in various ſenſes.

But this will by no means be our protection from running into idolatry, if he who was manifeſt in the fleſh is *not God over all bleſſed for evermore.* The Scripture has not done as the Angel did at Mount Sinai, ſet guards about the Divine honour:
Joh. xiv. 1. He is all along repreſented as partner in it: *You believe in God, believe alſo in me.* I do not deny but a miniſter, a good man, and eſpecially an Angel, may uſe thoſe words, That if ye believe in God, believe that I am ſent by him; but can any ſerious perſon think, that when Chriſt ſaid it to his drooping Diſciples, that it meant no more as it came out of his mouth, than it would out of theirs? He brings it in as an argument, that their *hearts ſhould not be troubled.*

—— v. 23. And ſo that paſſage, *That all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father; he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has ſent him.* It is a very ſhort anſwer, that the word AS does not ſignify equality; for which we have this inſtance given, *As my Father has ſent me, ſo ſend I you:* for according to that interpretation, Chriſt then ſaith no more of himſelf than what any preacher or believer upon earth may ſay, That all men are to honour a miniſter who comes in the name of God, *as* they honour the Father that ſent him; and he that honours the one, honours the other.

Though

Though the words may be twined and bended into a good humble ſenſe, yet how do you imagine they would ſound? Can the phraſe of honouring the Son *as* we honour the Father, mean no more than a ſimilitude, as it may do if applied to an Angel or a man? Are we to take the word in this place as we do in others? how comes *that* then to be given as the reaſon of it, That *as the Father raiſes up the dead, and quickens them, ſo the Son quickens whom he will: That the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men ſhould honour the Son as they honour the Father?* Can any one imagine, that the manner of the expreſſion is the ſame here with that which it is compared to: *As the Father ſends me, ſo ſend I you?* If we are not to take the phraſe in this full ſenſe in one place, becauſe it *may* be taken in a lower ſenſe in another, there is not any propoſition that we can prove out of the Bible: *Except we utter by the tongue words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken, for we ſhall ſpeak into the air?* SERM. 21. John v. 21, 22. 1 Cor. xiv. 9.

If I may be allowed to expound theſe Scriptures that give us the titles of the Father, in the way that is uſed with thoſe that lay down the very ſame words of the Son, we ſhall not have one text left to prove a God at all. As for example, when we read of our Mediator, that he is called *the Mighty God*, the force of the argument is taken off with this, that the name *may* be given to a creature. Why may not an Atheiſt uſe the ſame liberty with one text, as theſe do with another, and tell us as roundly, that thoſe words, Pſal. l. *The mighty God, even the Lord has ſpoken, and called the earth from the riſing of the ſun*, are to be underſtood of a king or an Angel? And farther, when it is ſaid of Chriſt, that he ſhall be called *the Everlaſting Father*, and that *his goings forth have been of old from everlaſting*, may you not put the ſame inglorious limita- Iſa. ix. 6. Mic. v. 2.

SERM. 21. tions upon the title that is given to God, when he
Dan. vii. 13. is ſaid to be *the Ancient of days?* It is true, the word *everlaſting* is uſed of creatures, and there it muſt be taken in a narrower ſenſe. But if that is the reaſon why it is to be ſo underſtood when applied to Chriſt, another ſet of people may with the ſame aſſurance ſay, that it means no more when
Pſ. xc. 2. we read that *from everlaſting to everlaſting Thou art God.*

What ground have we to imagine when the
1 Cor. ix. 21. Apoſtle ſaith, *I am not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt*, that we are to diſtinguiſh upon his words, as we do between fearing God and the king? At his converſion he cries out, *Who art thou, Lord?* And when he knew it was no other than Jeſus of Nazareth, he nevertheleſs enquires of
Acts xxiv. 14. him, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and yet it is certain, that he worſhipped no other than *the*
Rom. xiv. 8. *God of his fathers.* He tells us, that *whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's.* What Lord is this? you will
ver. 9, 10, 11, 12. ſee in the next words: *For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that* HE *might be the Lord both of dead and living.* And, *We muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of* CHRIST, *becauſe it is written, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to* ME, *and every tongue ſhall confeſs to* GOD; *ſo then every one of us ſhall give an account of himſelf to* GOD.

Will it not be very hard for an honeſt humble Chriſtian, who has had no education, or opportunity to be maſter of critical learning;—I ſay, will it not be hard upon him, to read exactly the ſame things demanded by the Father and the Son, and be told that one of them is but a creature? He
Pſal. l. 15. thinks it is his God that ſpeaks: *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee.* The ſame
Gen. iv. ult. Lord upon whom *men began to call* ſo long ago.

Now,

Now, what way can ſuch a one have to diveſt the word of the ſame ſenſe, when he reads of people in *every place calling upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours?* So when we are told, that *he that is called in the Lord, being a ſervant, is the* LORD'S *freeman; likewiſe he that is called being free, is* CHRIST'S *ſervant?* it may be anſwered, that this is a profeſſion we make to creatures, and a relation that we come into with men. Well it is true; but one would imagine, that though the word is ſo uſed in other places, it cannot be in this, becauſe the very next verſe gives a reaſon for it: *Ye are bought with a price, be ye not ſervants of men:* and therefore we are *Chriſt's ſervants*, in a way that we cannot be theirs. I durſt not ſay as David did to any other than God, *Lord, truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant.*—Thus does the Spirit juſtify Him who was manifeſt in the fleſh: he fills us with a deſire to pleaſe him: we are his people, and are made *willing* in the day of his power: *We worſhip Him in the beauty of holineſs: He is your Lord, and therefore worſhip you him.*

SERM. 21.
1 Cor. i. 2.
—vii. 22.
ver. 23.
Pſ. xcvi. 16.
Pſ. cx. 4.
Pſ. xlv. 11.

3. This gives us humble thoughts of ourſelves. Nothing ſhews the vileneſs of human nature ſo much as the diſpenſation of the Goſpel: *Boaſting is excluded, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. The excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, makes the principles we uſed to value, no more than *loſs*, and no better than *dung*. The dearer Chriſt is to my ſoul, the viler ſhall I be to myſelf. Thus the Apoſtle after he was illuminated tells us, he was *not meet* to be called by that name: That *to him, who was leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, was this grace given, that he ſhould preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee, what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery, that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.* As you heard under the former head, the Prophet cries out Undone: Why? becauſe he was

Rom. iii. 27.
Phil. iii. 8.
1 Cor. xv. 8, 9.
Eph. iii. 8, 9.

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SERM. 21. *a man of unclean lips, and dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips.* Did he never feel that conviction before? yes surely; but it never came with that power upon his mind as when he stood in the contemplation of a Saviour. And it was the glory of his person, as well as the design of his grace and love, that had made this impression: *Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* He speaks of him under the same title that David gave him:

Ps. xlv. 1. *I will write of things touching the King.*

It is true, the mere name proves no divinity, because it is given to creatures; but the question is, whether it can be understood of any less than a

ver. 6. God here; for it is said of him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The Church is considered as

ver. 11. his spouse: *The King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* And within the compass of two verses, they are called *the King's daughter;* of whom nevertheless it is said, *she shall be brought unto the King.* Why is the same title given promiscuously to the Father and the Son, if we may not have it expounded here,

Ps. xlvii. 7. as it is in other places, that *God is King of all the*

—xcv. 3. *earth, and a great King above all gods.* Isaiah was humbled in his own eyes, when he saw him in that glory. It is of him they speak in those words,

—xcix. 4. *The King's strength loves judgment;* and in the song

Rev. xv. 3. of the Lamb, *Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints.*

4. This inspires us with charity to others. That is one fruit of the humility I mentioned under the former head; for *only by pride comes contention, but with the lowly advised, is wisdom.* Whether Christ is revealed in us or no, will appear as much in our temper as it does in our principles. A person may have clear notions about the Scripture doctrine, and a happy way of bringing them into light; but if he feels any thing of this upon his own soul, it will keep him from passion as much as it can do from

from error. A man that wrangles and behaves himſelf unſeemly, may have the right of the argument; he may prove that *God was manifeſt in the fleſh;* but ſuch a one is no inſtance that ever he was *juſtified in the Spirit.* Whatever ſentiments he has about the ſufficiency of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and the neceſſity of depending upon it, yet either he has had no experience of theſe things, or he has forgot it all. *If theſe things be in you and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; but he that lacketh theſe things, is blind, and cannot ſee far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins.* SERM. 21. 2 Pet. i. 8, 9.

I may look upon the perſon who denies the Divinity of Chriſt to be in a miſtake, and give him my reaſons why I cannot come into his expoſition of ſeveral ſcriptures; but if I have felt *the power of that reſurrection* for which I am pleading, and *the fellowſhip of thoſe ſufferings* which I defend with my arguments, and am *conformed to that death* which I proclaim abroad, it will govern my temper, as well as direct my notions. I have reaſon to ſuſpect whether my wiſdom is *pure*, if it does not make me *peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated.* Jam. iii. 17. When orthodoxy puts us upon reviling language and cruel imprecations, we are only foaming out our own ſhame. There is nothing in truth that ſhould make us behave ourſelves unſeemly: If we cannot *in meekneſs inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*, upon a peradventure *that God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*, we are not fit to be the *ſervants of the Lord.* Roughneſs and incivility is *one* way of anſwering a heretic, but it will tempt all mankind to think that we have got *no other.* I do not ſay, and I never thought it, that in the preſent awful controverſy, which iſſues in no leſs than either denying the Lord that bought us, or worſhipping and ſerving the creature 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

SERM. 21. equally with the Creator, passion lay on one side of the question, and meekness on the other.

1 Cor. viii. 1. *Knowledge puffeth up*, saith the Apostle, even a knowledge of the truth; but if we have any experience upon our souls of what we are pleading for, it will have a great command over us. An awakened conscience will put you upon contending earnestly for the truth as it is in Jesus; but it will teach you at the same time, to be *gentle towards all men.* Scolding is an evidence that a person comes rather for the plunder of the war, than the success of the cause.

Not that a peaceable temper makes us indifferent to the doctrines of the Gospel; no, far from it. I will suppose the case of an enlightened convert, that he approaches to Christ as the *God whose throne is for ever and ever;* that he depends upon him as having *brought in an everlasting righteousness*, and that he derives from him as *the King of saints.* These are notions and principles that he will by no means part with; he finds his soul drawn out into the highest degrees of reverence to a Saviour. If his confidence is in Christ Jesus, it is from a belief Isa. xlv. 22. that he is the God whom *all the ends of the earth shall look to;* and if he is not God, the person is not only in an error, but he is struck off from his dependence, he dare not rely on him as the author and finisher of his faith. Now if such a one comes into the argument, it is no wonder that he is tenacious of those principles that enter into his best devotion, and are the support of his greatest hopes; but he is too full of the mystery, to be capable of wrangling about it; it is too much his concern for that; none but people who feel a great deal less than he does, can treat the subject in such a manner. If the zeal and learning of other persons are opposed to him, and would take him off from the truth that he has received with love, *he will hold fast his profession:* though perhaps he may not be

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an equal maſter of argument with thoſe who have lifted themſelves in the cauſe, and devoted their whole ſtudy for ſeveral years to this controverſy; yet he knows from within, *in whom he has believed*, and will not part with thoſe principles upon which he thinks Him *able to keep what he has committed to him againſt that day.* SERM. 21. 2 Tim. i. 12.

If I ever felt the power of Chriſt's reſurrection, I can bear all the reproaches that we are like to meet with, and that are flowing ſo faſt upon us, on the account of our zeal for him. Of late we have been charged with *ſetting the Son above the Father*, which is an opinion I never ſo much as heard of, until I met with it in a printed accuſation *. And now we are laid under a new ſcandal, as being a people moſt inclined to perſecution; and the principles that are ſuppoſed to lead us into it, are not thoſe by which we have been diſtinguiſhed, but what we have in common with the eſtabliſhed Church. It is not our ſcrupling ceremonies, or an inequality in the office of the miniſtry, but it is our adherence to the doctrine of my text, that has laid us under theſe new ſlanders. And *theſe are not enemies that have reproached us, then we could have borne it; neither is it they who profeſſed to hate us, that have magnified themſelves againſt us, then we could have hid ourſelves from them. But it is a man, a guide, an acquaintance, with whom we have taken ſweet counſel, and walked to the houſe of God in company.* Our reproach is now *for the name of Chriſt.* Pſal. lv. 12, 13, 14. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

If we do indeed maintain either this or any other cauſe with an ungodly rancour, it is wrong; the argument does not need it, and the Spirit of Chriſt will not bear it: *The wrath of man works not the righteouſneſs of God.* But of this I am ſure, that there is no neceſſity of *ſpeaking the truth* in any other way but that of *love*; and if ever any thing has dropt from my mouth unworthy of the charity

* Mr Emlyn's Works, p. 58.

SERM. 21. charity which is the end of the commandment, I have done *that which I allow not:* For though there is none whom I more admire than Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, yet there is nothing I more abhor than perſecution in every form and ſhape: He needs none of my folly and corruption to promote his cauſe. The argument is certainly as good for *him* as it was for Baal; *if he be a God, he will plead for himſelf when one has caſt down his altar.*

5. Another principle that the teſtimony of the Spirit has an influence upon, is that peace and hope that runs through the lives of believers. It is in enmity to this, that Satan has raiſed ſuch oppoſition to the doctrines of the Goſpel. He grudges the Chriſtian that ſerenity of mind which himſelf has loſt. He would involve mankind in his own deſpair, and as *he is reſerved in chains under darkneſs*, he would have them be ſo too. To that purpoſe he takes all imaginable pains, either to prevent this work of the Spirit in our ſouls, or to divert us from heeding it.

And one way is the method of the preſent controverſy, which is, to demand an *explication* of what we confeſs to be *myſterious:* That is the way to enſnare our faith, and entangle our peace: As, for example, when I am enquired of, whether the Three that bear record in heaven are three modes, operations, or infinite minds, theſe are words which the Scripture has not given me, and therefore I have nothing to ſay to them. If the queſtion is, whether they are *Three*, I can anſwer, Yes; If I am aſked whether they are three *Gods*, I muſt ſay, No: But how they are three, and how they are one, I do not pretend to tell. The ways of expreſſion that people have ſhewn their fondneſs to, and by which they have endeavoured to make it intelligible, have been only ſo many vain plots againſt the myſterioufneſs of the doctrine, and theſe have proved temporary as they deſerved to do.

Creeds

Creeds have expired, grown old, and been ready to vaniſh away; they change as ages do: but *the faith once delivered to the Saints* is the ſame. Thus far the believer is at a point, that he knows upon what his hope is raiſed. Theſe are principles, which, though he cannot explain, yet they are what his ſoul flees to; and as ridiculous as a myſterious doctrine may appear to others, it is a foundation of hope to him. *His heart is comforted to the riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.* SERM. 21. Col. ii. 2.

6. It prepares him for a dying hour; he dare truſt his ſoul to the care of a Redeemer at laſt. *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.* He looks to him as the *finiſher* of this faith, and therefore his eſteem for him muſt be equal to ſo great a dependence in the moſt important act of religion. Thus Chriſt is juſtified in the Spirit, and the reputation he has in the heart of a believer, agrees to his glory above, where he is *ſeen of Angels.* Acts vii. 59.

SERMON XXII.

March 1. 1718-19.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

——*Seen of Angels*——

THIS is the third branch of a Myſtery great without controverſy, and gives us a farther account of Him who was *manifeſt* in the fleſh, and *juſtified in the Spirit.* That he is preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world, ſhews

SERM. 22. us the empire that he has below; but his being seen of Angels is an argument of the glory that he is received into *above*. Theſe are the higheſt order of the creation, the *morning* ſtars; *the ſons of God* in a nobler ſenſe of the word than can be affirmed of our nature; and it declares to us the value of this great ſalvation, that thoſe *thinking flames* ſhould feel any concern about it. There are three reaſons that would move us to ſuppoſe they had no lot or portion in this matter, and therefore muſt no more regard it than they do the increaſe of the earth, the returns of ſpring and ſummer, and harveſt and winter, which is nothing to them who live in a ſtate of equal light and happineſs.

Job xxxviii. 7.

Firſt, They have always continued in the perfection and purity of their creation, and therefore had no need of any redemption from God, or any reconciliation to him. It could not be ſaid of them as it was of man, that the *Lord made them upright, but they ſought out many inventions*. *Secondly*, As the elect Angels never ſinned, ſo thoſe of that nature, who left their firſt habitation, were never to be ſaved; and therefore though the Son of God had a deſire to the works of his hands, yet it was not to any of *their number*. *Thirdly*, As an evidence of this, that they were diſtinguiſhed out of the caſe, when He came upon the grand expedition of his love, *He verily took not on him the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of Abraham*. He declared, that his concern lay with thoſe children that were *partakers of fleſh and blood* by his own *taking part of the ſame*. He was (as no Angel ever had been) *made fleſh, and dwelt among us*. They are neither in our number, nor in our neighbourhood. They do not come into this world, in the way that he did, as inhabitants. A ſpirit has no fleſh and bones, as the diſciples ſaw him to have.

Eccleſ. vii. 29.

Heb. ii. 16.

John i. 14.

And

SERM. 22.

And yet, though one would have thought theſe things might have carried off their regard from the work that he came about, and made them look upon the whole affair as what did not belong to them, you find their name is brought into this account of our great Redeemer: He was not only manifeſt in the fleſh, and *in all things made like to his brethren,* as a merciful and a faithful High Prieſt, but he is *ſeen of Angels.* Theirs was a nature that he ſlid over, both in his humiliation and his advancement. You will find that their ſtation was ſomething that lay between the one and the other: For in order to the ſuffering of death, he was made *lower than the Angels,* and when he is received up into glory, he is made *ſo much better than the Angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;* and yet you ſee they are brought into the account that we have of him, as admirers, if not gainers, by the purchaſe of his mercy, *He was ſeen of Angels.*

As this belongs to the myſtery of godlineſs, ſo it contains in it ſomething wonderful, and therefore we muſt look farther than the ſound of the words. He was ſeen of men, and when *they ſaw* Iſa. liii. 2. *him, there was no form or comelineſs in him, that they ſhould deſire him.* He was ſeen of devils; one of them cried out, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God: and therefore if that is all, that the Angels were among the ſpectators of his perſon and actions, it is not important enough to have a place in this text. There is no myſtery in it. But the word muſt be taken in a larger view, as it comprehends their diligent attention to him, their admiration and delight in him, and the pleaſure with which they obſerved the glory of his merit, the ſucceſs of his death, and the triumph of his reſurrection. I ſhall proceed upon this head in the following method:

1. Enquire

SERM. 22. 1. Enquire into the meaning of the phraſe, what it was for Chriſt to be *ſeen of Angels.*

2. Shew that this belongs to him as GOD, for under that title we are carried through the whole account that is given of him. And,

3. That this is a *myſtery*, one of the wonders of our religion; and,

4. That it is a myſtery of *godlineſs*. Believing it makes us better; we are *nouriſhed up in the words of good doctrine.*

I. What is it for *that God* who was manifeſt in the fleſh, and juſtified in the Spirit, to be *ſeen of Angels?* I anſwer, Theſe words ſhew us the eſteem they had, firſt, for his Perſon; and, ſecondly, for the Deſign that he came about.

1ſt, We may hence collect the eſteem they had for the *Perſon* of our Lord. I do not here conſider his relation to them as a Creator, for he made them, Col. i. 16. and not they themſelves. *By him were all things created, whether in heaven, or in earth, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by him, and for him.* But I ſhall obſerve the regard they paid to him as the Mediator between God and man, as *the man Chriſt Jeſus*, as one made lower than themſelves; and this you will collect from the ſeveral parts of his ſtory.

You may ſee the concern that the Angels had at his birth, his baptiſm, his temptation in the wilderneſs, his agony, his reſurrection, his aſcenſion, and the conſequences of that in heaven. In all theſe times he was nearly attended by the Spirits about the throne. A detachment of the hea- Heb. i. 7. venly guards was ſent down. *Of the Angels he ſaith, He makes his Angels Spirits;* this being connected to what the Spirit ſaith of Chriſt Jeſus, lets us ſee theſe two things: *Firſt*, The nature of the Angels, that they are *Spirits*, purely and ſimply ſo,

not

not embodied, not incarnate; and, *secondly*, That they are thus *made* for service, to be capable of more expeditious duty than we can possibly come into. They were made Spirits with regard to the Son; their lively and active nature is employed about him: But it is time that I enter upon the particulars under which I am to range my thoughts. SERM. 22.

1. He was seen and loved and admired by the Angels at his *birth*. How ready were they to tell the news, and to serve the design? Observe with what a tenderness and caution they do their office: for they knew that the dazzle of *their* nature would be too much for a conversation with *ours*; therefore when one of them stands at the right-hand of the altar of incense, as Zacharias was there attending in his place, his first work was to take off all fear and trembling; upon which he tells him, that *his prayer was heard, and his wife*, who was now stricken in years, as well as himself, *should have a son*. The very naming of that turns the dread into a dispute. Zacharias is more astonished at what he heard, than at what he saw, *Whereby shall I know this, seeing that I am an old man?* But the Angel describes the office of the child who should be born, and does it in such a way, that he might well say, *Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord.* Luke i. 13. ver. 14, 15, 16.

There had been many a Prophet and eminent man among them, and yet no such preparations made for his coming into the world; but the reason of all this is, that *many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias*. Before whom? Before *the Lord God*, to whom he should turn the children of Israel: And who is this *Lord their God*, before whom he was to go, but He that had *the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily?*

SERM. 22. *dily?* Zacharias ſeems to make no difficulty of it,
Luke i. 67. when he came to circumciſe the child. *The Holy Ghoſt was then upon him*, and under that influence
ver. 76. he delivers thoſe words, *Thou child ſhalt be called the Prophet of the* HIGHEST; *for thou ſhalt go before the face of the* LORD *to prepare his ways.*

There muſt be a miſerable tearing of all the connection that theſe paſſages have to one another, before we can ſuppoſe that our bleſſed Saviour himſelf is not here called the *Lord God of the children of Iſrael*, by the Angel, and the *Moſt High* by Zacharias. And of this John bare witneſs, *I am not the Chriſt, but am ſent before him;* as it was ſaid he ſhould *go before him.* So gentle and kind was this Angel, firſt to take off the fright, and then to give in his meſſage. In the ſame manner he pro-
—— 29. ceeded with the Virgin Mary. *She was troubled at the ſaying, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be:* And when he tells her of having a Son, though her objection was much greater than Zacharias's, yet ſhe reſts upon that an-
—— 37. ſwer, *With God nothing is impoſſible.*

How careful, how condeſcending was it, for Gabriel, *who ſtands in the preſence of God*, thus to talk with poor mortals! The like goodneſs do they
Ch. ii. 8, 9. ſhew at the actual birth of our Lord. *There were in the ſame country ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night; and lo the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them; and they were ſore afraid.* You need not wonder much at that, for this apparition was of another kind from thoſe in the Old Teſtament. Then Angels put on the form of men, ſo that oftentimes they were taken for no more, till after they had delivered their meſſage: But to theſe ſhepherds the Angel looked more like himſelf. However, he ſoon takes off the fright,
ver. 10, 11, 12. or at leaſt mingles ſomething with it, *Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall*

ſhall be to all people: For unto you is born this day, SERM. 22.
in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Chriſt the Lord. And this ſhall be a ſign to you, Ye ſhall find the babe wrapt in ſwaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.

Obſerve, though the manifeſtation was glorious and frightful, yet the thing told them was important, and what they had long expected; and the ſign was as familiar and deſcriptive as they could deſire it to be: ſo that you ſee what effect this had upon them: though we cannot ſuppoſe they had loſt their terror, yet they reſolve to make the experiment. There is no ſuch crying out as there was between Manoah and his wife: *Alas, we ſhall* Judg. xiii. 22. *die, for we have ſeen an Angel of the Lord!* No, no, but *they ſaid one to another, Let us go even now to Bethlehem, and ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which the Lord has made known to us: And they came with haſte, and found Mary and Joſeph, and the Babe lying in a manger.* It was a thing that only mere neceſſity could have occaſioned, that a new-born child ſhould be thrown into ſuch a place. They in the *inn* could eaſily tell how it came about, becauſe there was no other room for them; but that ſhepherds in a diſtant field ſhould know this ſtrange accident, and enquire for a child by a token that never happened before, was remarkable. No wonder that *they returned glorifying and praiſing God for all the things that they had heard and ſeen, as it was told unto them.* So well had the Angel made himſelf intelligible to poor unlearned men, who could have no intereſt by the contrivance of the plot, and no capacity to take a part in it.

How amazing is it, that a creature who *ſtands before God*, ſhould deliver himſelf to a company of ſhepherds, ſo as to leave them in no confuſion? It ſhews how hearty he was in the cauſe he came about. Nay, beſides this one, there was *ſuddenly with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſing*

SERM. 22. *ſing God, and ſaying, Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace, and good will towards men.* Obſerve, this multitude did not appear at firſt, for then the ſhepherds would have been ſunk too low to have received any meſſage; but after the Angel had gone diſtinctly through his errand, let them know what had happened, and given them an inconteſtible rule how they ſhould be aſſured of it; when he had poſſeſſed them of the whole ſtory, *then* in a moment the reſt who longed to begin,—the whole multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſed God; when the ſhepherds could be pleaſed with it, and not frighted.

And they do it in ſuch a ſong as could never be conceived to come from thoſe that kept flocks by night. For ſhepherds to talk of viſions and angelical concerts, might be ſuſpected as vain and deluſive; but when they bring a ſong with them ſo full of the cauſe it refers to, none can think it was of their own compoſing, and therefore it is ſaid, *that all they that heard it, wondered at thoſe things which were told them by the ſhepherds.*

There are ſeveral paſſages that I might bring
Mat. i. 20. under this head, as the Angel of the Lord's *appearing to Joſeph in a dream*, and bidding him *not fear to take to him Mary his wife*, and giving him that anſwer to his objection which none but an Angel could give him: *That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghoſt.* So again, the Angel of the Lord appears to him in another dream, and directs him
ch. ii. 13. to *ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and go into Egypt, and be there until he brought him word.* And when Herod was dead, this Angel appears to him in a dream *the third time*, with an or-
ver. 20. der for him to *take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Iſrael.* Nay, *fourthly*, there is another inſtance relating to this period, that he
ver. 22. is *warned again* in a dream to *turn aſide into the parts of Galilee*, and come and live in a city called

Nazareth.

Nazareth. So diligent were those Angels to convey the news, and to serve the design, either by voices or dreams, as the people concerned were prepared to receive them. SERM. 22.

2. He was seen of Angels, *i. e.* admired and loved by them, at his *baptism*, which was properly his institution or entrance upon the public ministry. He submitted to that ordinance, that he might *fulfil all righteousness;* and when it was over, *heaven opened, the Holy Ghost descended upon him*, and a testimony came from thence, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* If heaven opened, you may be sure the Angels either came down or gazed through. They who had attended his birth, and sung him into the world; they who had watched him down to Egypt and up again; they who had received a charge concerning him in his youth, in their hands to bear him up; who had encamped round about him, more than they do about every one that fears the Lord: These, I say, would be looking on, when the Spirit came down; first, to give him his qualifications, and then to proclaim his credentials: For as he was *anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power*, so John himself professes, *I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize said, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, that same is he who baptizes with the Holy Ghost.* They *go forth to behold King Solomon in his crown, on the day of his espousals, and the day of the gladness of his heart.* Mat. iii. 15. ver. 17. Joh. i. 33. Cant. iii. ult.

3. At his temptation in the wilderness, or rather after it, he was seen of Angels. He was there forty days and forty nights. He went thither *to be tempted of the devil.* He submitted to the necessity and torment of nature, for after such long fasting, he hungered. And as Satan had put him upon working a miracle for bread, and casting himself down from the temple, to try whether the Angels would observe their charge, and upon wor-

SERM. 22. Mat. iv. 11. ſhipping him for the kingdoms and glories of this world; ſo *when the devils left him, the Angels came and miniſtered to him.*

What thoſe words comprehend, we are not told in particular; but we may without any danger ſuppoſe it from the nature of the temptation, firſt, that they brought him food; for it was *that* he wanted, and he told the devil, that *man lived not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, i. e.* by any other proviſion that the creation affords; for the word proceeding out of the mouth of God, is there to be underſtood of the gifts of his hand, as you will find by comparing it with the original paſſage, Deut. viii. 3. *He humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, that he might make thee know that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.* Here the *manna* is called a word proceeding out of the mouth of the Lord; and this, you know, has that character given it, that *man did eat Angels food, i. e.* the food which they brought. So that it is not improbable, that when they miniſtred to him, it was to ſupply his neceſſity. And as they had received a charge concerning him, in their hands to bear him up, ſo they carried him ſafely through the wilderneſs. They had no occaſion to aſſiſt him Iſa. lxiii. 5. in the conflict, knowing that *his own power would bring ſalvation, and his fury uphold him;* but it was their duty and delight to attend him afterwards.

4. At his agony in the garden he was ſeen of Angels. He was to endure it, and to endure it in his own perſon, without any aſſiſtance from thoſe glorious creatures that wiſhed him well: *He trod the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with him;* and therefore he ſpeaks as one totally deſerted. He took no more than three diſciples with him, and he withdrew himſelf even from them about a ſtone's caſt, but deſired them to watch.

watch. There he pleads with the Father, and at last submits to him. His disciples are asleep; their eyes are shut, when the pores of his body are open in a dreadful manner; for *his sweat was as it were great drops of blood:* and then it is observed, *there appeared to him an Angel from heaven to strengthen him.* SERM. 22. Luke xxii. 43, 44.

This can be understood of no more than some few supports that were given to his human nature. It was that which recoiled, which fainted, swet, and bled; and this must have *a little strength* to go through the remaining sorrow. He had not strength enough to *bear* his cross, but he must have enough to *live* so long upon it as he did, to give several orders from it, to cry out, to say, *It is finished*, with a full voice, and immediately to die at once. How careful was this good Angel, that he might, in a station which made him lower than themselves, be able to go through his undertaking?

5. At his resurrection he was seen and attended of Angels. They were ready to serve him at all times; but for important reasons obliged to leave him at his death. He tells Peter, that he could pray to the Father, *who would presently send him more than twelve legions of Angels.* And if the Father had sent them, they would gladly have come; and what work must one of them make in a cabal of Sadducees, who believed neither Angel nor Spirit! But then, saith he, *how should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* So that it was necessary *for the suffering of death*, that he should be stript of his guards.

But when he came to rise again, all these restraints are over. The Angel of the Lord, as one no longer held in, goes early in the morning, and by an earthquake *rolls away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.* Mat. xxviii. 2, 3.

And

SERM. 22. And see what different distributions he made of his influences: *For fear of him did the keepers shake, and become as dead men;* and yet you may be sure these were picked out as the stoutest of the faction. But to a couple of poor disconsolate women he
Mat. xxviii. 5, 6, 7. saith, *Fear not, for I know ye seek Jesus who was crucified: he is not here, he is risen as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and goes before you into Galilee: lo, I have told you.* 'I *your* friend, and *his* servant; he has left me 'behind, that you might have no disappointment.' Though the keepers lay sprawling, and *none of the men of might could find their hands*, yet these women
ver. 8. *departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy.* There was an awe upon their spirits, but it gave them a delicious confusion, and *they ran to bring the disciples word.* Afterwards some of the disciples come, and see nothing of him, and therefore go their way. Mary, who had brought them to the sepulchre, continues weeping there, and will not leave it. Upon this, *she sees two Angels in white, sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.* So ready were these happy creatures to shew him their regard, that they will go and *live* a while in the place where he had been *dead.* Angels in a grave! the sons of immortal life in the chambers of death! that they should sit where none in their nature shall ever lie, is very unaccountable. But you may say of their behaviour over our Lord's grave as it is said of his over that of Lazarus, *Behold how they loved him!*

6. He was seen of Angels, *i. e.* admired and attended by them, at his ascension. There were forty days, which, as they fell between his manifestation in the flesh, and his being received up into glory, so they partook of both, *i. e.* he was neither always with his disciples, nor had he totally left them.

There

There was in his converſation a mixture of the inhabitant and the ſtranger: ſuch an intermediate life was only to hold the length of forty days. And this being the laſt that his diſciples ſhould ſee of him here below, he was determined to conclude his work upon earth, with a dignity ſuitable to the errand that brought him hither. SERM. 22.

The ſtory is told by Luke, That he *led them out to Bethany, and lift up his hands and bleſſed them; and as he bleſſed them he was parted from them.* In another book it is ſaid, *When he ſpake theſe things, whilſt they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight.* But though they might not ſee all the ſolemnity with which he went up, as not being able to bear it, yet it is deſcribed, Pſal. lxviii. that *the chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of Angels; the Lord is among them.* Who is this Lord, but the great Mediator? *When* was he among them, but at the time that he *aſcended up on high, and led captivity captive?* This title, *the chariots of* GOD, intimates their office. He is ſaid in another place to *ride on the wings of the wind, and to make the clouds his chariot, i. e.* (to bring it as near to our own conceptions as can be), they attend him where he moves. They go up with him, ſhouting, ſinging, praiſing, filling the air in their paſſage with melody, and the heaven in their entry with triumph. And the whole of that pompous glory concluded in this ſervice of the Angels, that two of them ſtood by the Apoſtles *in white apparel, which alſo ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.* Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Acts i. 9. Pſ. lxviii. 17. Acts i. 11.

7. He is ſeen of the Angels in heaven. John ſaw in the midſt of the throne, and of the four creatures, and the four and twenty elders, *a Lamb as it had been ſlain.* It is obſerved, that *when he* Rev. v. 6. Heb. i. 6.

SERM. 22. *brings the Firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* This bringing him into the world may be underſtood of his Incarnation; and if they were to worſhip him *then*, we may conclude what a profound regard they would give him when he was made *perfect from his ſufferings.* But ſome are of opinion, that the word *again* ſhould not be the tie between one verſe and another, but connected to what is here ſaid: That it ought not to be as we read it, *Again, when he brings the Firſt-begotten;* but, When he brings the Firſt-begotten *again* into the world, *i. e.* at his reſurrection and aſcenſion. When he returns to *the glory, that he had with the Father before the world was*, then are orders iſſued out to the Angels to *worſhip him.* But I promiſe myſelf more room to conſider this paſſage, when I come to argue from the behaviour of the Angels to our Redeemer, as an evidence of his Deity: That ſuch a carriage as they are directed to, can be given to no other than the Supreme Being, one that is *over all, God bleſſed for ever.*

March 15. 1718-19.

SERMON XXIII.

2*d*, THE eſteem the Angels had for our bleſſed Lord, appears from their care to promote the *deſign* that he came about. Though he was not in their nature, nor had they any need of his purchaſe, yet his good will towards men is what they follow with their hearty wiſhes. We read of the

the care they have to spread the Gospel, their particular tenderness for ministers, their joy at the conversion of a sinner, their diligence about the heirs of salvation, their readiness to take the charge of a dying believer, and the welcome they give him into the place of their own habitation. SERM. 23.

1. Christ is seen and admired of the Angels, in his *Design* as well as his *Person*, because it is their care to spread the Gospel. Not to preach it, for that would rather confound sinners than awaken them: *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*; yet the Scripture has taken notice of their zeal about this great affair. Hence we read of *the Angels flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.* This vision was of a thing that shall never be, *i. e.* we cannot think that God will lay aside men of like passions with ourselves, and make those spirits his ministers who are all of them *flames of fire.* But thus much may be argued from it, that they do some way or other promote the knowledge of Christ among men, and so lead them into the methods of life eternal. 2 Cor. iv. 7. Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

They were the first preachers that we read of in the New Testament, to Zacharias, the Virgin Mary, and the shepherds. In their discourses to each of these, they lay out the nature, the office, and the design of our Redeemer. That he should be called *the Son of the Highest, and the Lord his God shall give him the kingdom of his father David; and he shall rule over the house of Jacob; and of that kingdom there shall be no end.* To the shepherds they do not only proclaim his birth, and his title, *a Saviour* Luke i. 32, 33.

SERM. 23. Luke ii. 13, 14. *viour who is Christ the Lord,* but the great result of all this dispensation, that it would be *glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.*

Nay, I may take their ministry from a more early date. Daniel wept in prayer for his people, his holy city, and the sanctuary of the Lord that was desolate. An Angel comes down, after he had *chastened himself with fasting and supplication;* and what was it to tell him? a great deal more than the news of political mercies, that the captivity of Jerusalem was accomplished. Besides that, he leads his thoughts into the main hope of Israel, that *Messiah the Prince was to come;* to come both as Dan. ix. 24. a Prince and a sacrifice: that he would *be cut off, to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.* These are the chief doctrines of our Gospel, and they are revealed to that holy Prophet by the Angel.

Do but observe what a nobler employment these happy creatures had upon the return of the people from Babylon, than when they conducted the children of Israel out of Egypt. God sent his Angel before them to *drive out the Amorite;* but there is no comparison between their providing for the Jews a plentiful country, and their opening out in a better light what had been *the hope of their fathers.* They brought these glad tidings of great joy at several periods: We only *say* what they *sung:* They and we are in the same story; and what an aggravation will this be of our neglect, if we despise what they bring!

It is mentioned as a perpetual brand upon the children of Israel, that they loathed the manna which was *Angels food, i. e.* the Angels conveyed Acts vii. 53. it to them; and again, that though they *received the law by the disposition of Angels, they did not* Heb. ii. 2. *keep it:* and that *the word spoken by Angels was stedfast,*

ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience re- SERM. 23.
ceived a recompence of reward. But as their care about *us* is more engaged, ſo our unbelief is more enhanced. When the Apoſtle had told us of the Angels' *flying through the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting Goſpel,* he goes on to ſhew us their zeal for the reformation of Chriſtianity from thoſe corruptions under which it has ſuffered; and his prophecy is to be underſtood of a particular period that we are waiting for: *Then followed another* Rev. xiv. 8.
Angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

How comes this to be the concern of Angels? why are they in heaven ſo much affected with our ſufferings upon earth? It is certain, their religion is always clean and always eaſy; *Babylon* ſhall never hurt *them:* but it is a Redeemer's cauſe; and *that* warms them into a zeal for thoſe happy days when the mother of abominations is to periſh with all her arts. This they proclaim, not only as a thing *that* will be, but they give fair warning, *If any man worſhip the beaſt and his image, and re-* ver. 9, 10.
ceive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy Angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb.

What a teſtimony is here given to our ſeparation from thoſe corruptions that have ſtolen into the worſhip of God! It is no matter to me by what convocations or councils it is cenſured, if we have the opinion of the Angels, *the general aſſembly and church of the Firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven.* Value the Goſpel as it is Chriſtian, and admire your religion as it is reformed. An Angel preaches the one and encourages the other; and then comes in this remark upon the

SERM. 23. whole, *Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* Our duty is an act of patience: A man that will be faithful will be opposed; and the thing we are obliged to keep is not only the commandments of God, what is contained in natural religion, but *that faith of Jesus*, which we can only have by revelation.

Rev. xiv. 12.

2. We may farther see the care of the holy Angels about the work of a Redeemer, from their tenderness for the ministers of the Gospel. I am not now making way for any of those whimsical stories with which the Papists have bubbled their readers. I know no more of Angels than the Scripture has told me; their ministry is a part of the revelation I meet with there. It is plain, though they do not preach the Gospel, they have a special charge about those that do. We have examples of this, both in the Old and New Testament, which shews the wisdom of our Redeemer, that the persons who are like to meet with hardships from the inhabitants of this world, shall have better usage from those that belong to another.

I will go over a few passages that we find in the Acts of the Apostles. In the 12th chapter, you read that Peter was designed for the same violent death that James the brother of John had already suffered; and the utmost care is taken that he shall not escape. He is fast asleep between two soldiers, bound with two heavy chains. The Church can do no more than *pray for him;* and that is doing enough, for the work fell into able hands: *The Angel of the Lord* comes into the prison, raises him up, calls him out; the chains fell from his hands, and this in so still a manner, that Peter *thought he saw a vision; the iron gate that led to the city opened of its own accord*, and he is left at liberty to visit a company of good people who were then at prayer for him. When he was come to himself he said,

Acts xii. 3.

SERM. 23.

said, *Now know I of a surety, that the Lord has sent his Angel, and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.* And, as if the Angel thought his work but half done in delivering the Apostle, unless he had also killed a tyrant, we are told at the end of that chapter, that when Herod sat basking himself in the flatteries of a shouting croud, *the Angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten up of worms, and gave up the ghost.* By this means *the word of God grew and multiplied.*

Acts xii. 11.

ver. 23, 24.

Such another instance we have of their care about the Apostle Paul. He and his company were in a storm *fourteen days and nights;* they saw neither sun, moon, nor stars, and perhaps no brethren ashore were sensible of their danger, and therefore it is likely there was no extraordinary prayer for them, as there had been in the case of Peter. But if Christians knew not their danger, Angels did; *For,* saith Paul, *there stood by me this night the Angel of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, and said, Fear not, for thou must be brought before Cesar, and lo, God has given thee all them that sail with thee.* Though our experience does not run upon these stories, yet we have ground to imagine, that the heavenly guards do us many an invisible kindness, without making any noise about it. The escapes that faithful ministers have had in times of persecution are so remarkable, that it is no straining upon the case, to suppose those favours conveyed by the standing officers of a Redeemer's providence.

Acts xxvii. 20, 21, 27.

3. Their love to the great work that our Lord came about, appears in the *joy there is among them at the conversion of a sinner.* Our Saviour gives us this under the similitude of two parables: The man that found his lost sheep, and the woman her piece of money; they are each of them represented as *calling their friends and neighbours together to come and rejoice with them.* These friends and

Luke xv. 6.

SERM. 23. neighbours neither ſuffered by the affliction, nor gained by the mercy. They were unconcerned, any farther than ſympathy and good nature made them look upon it as their own caſe at ſecond-hand. The Angels are very properly ſignified by thoſe names; they neither loſe nor get by the ruin or ſalvation of men. If there was no ſuch thing as a redemption for our nature, there would ſtill be the ſame happineſs for theirs; but they are called in to rejoice with a Redeemer. He who has *fought and ſaved that which was loſt* is the Perſon whom they love, and therefore they are glad with him. This is the very application that our Lord himſelf makes of the parable: *I ſay unto you, there is joy among the Angels of heaven over one ſinner that repenteth.*

From hence you may conclude, either their preſence in our aſſemblies, or the correſpondence that is kept open between our world and theirs. There is no ſuch thing as an awakened ſoul, a ſinner turned from the error of his way, but they know it, either by obſervation, or by tidings; and this ſets them a rejoicing. Why? From the good-will they have to a Redeemer. They ſaw him in *the travail of his ſoul;* they obſerved him in the garden, the weight and torture of that *agony;* they beheld him bleeding, groaning, and dying upon the croſs; and it muſt needs be their pleaſure to find that all this was not in vain; that as he gave himſelf for ſinners, ſo by his grace ſinners give themſelves to him. They rejoice in this as the effect of a dear bargain, as a mighty purchaſe, and a glorious victory. There is more than love to a ſoul, that fills the joy; it is part of their praiſes to him who *came to ſave us in the name of the Lord,* and therefore they ſing *Hoſanna in the higheſt.*

And if they are ſo delighted in the repentance of one ſinner, what will they be when the word of the Lord has a free courſe, and is glorified? With what pleaſure do they look on, when people flock

to

to the Lord, *as doves to their windows*, every one fluttering and preſſing for light! What a good day was that to the Angels in heaven, when one ſermon fetched in three thouſand ſouls! when the people were *pricked in their hearts*, the Angels felt the conviction; not in pain and affrightment as they did, but they ſaw what it would end in; and we may ſuppoſe from the pleaſure that diffuſed among them then, what a ſhare they will have in *joying and beholding our order and the ſtedfaſtneſs of our faith in Chriſt.* When the days come that *the knowledge of the Lord ſhall* not *drop as the rain, and diſtil as the dew*, but *cover the earth as the waters do the ſea*, it will make our earth look like their heaven, and their heaven ſtill brighter and ſweeter: *As the light of the moon ſhall be like the light of the ſun, ſo the light of the ſun ſhall be ſeven fold, as the light of ſeven days.* What an encouragement ſhould this be to miniſters, and indeed to all of you, whom the Angels have ſo much obliged? Fulfil ye their joy, promote their happineſs, give them occaſion to bring more praiſes into heaven.

SERM. 23.

Acts ii. 41.

Iſa. xi. 9.

ch. xxx. 26.

4. You ſee the concern they have for the work of Chriſt, by their care about the heirs of ſalvation. Our Lord has told us, that they are *all miniſtring Spirits; firſt*, To him; to wait upon his perſon, to admire and contemplate his glory: But that is not all; for, *ſecondly*, They are *ſent forth to miniſter to them who ſhall be the heirs of ſalvation.* Where you obſerve,

Heb. i. 14.

Firſt, That their whole number is included in this order, they are *all* miniſtring Spirits. Gabriel himſelf, who *ſtands in the preſence of God*, goes down to Daniel in a dungeon, to Zacharias in the temple, to the Virgin Mary in her ſolitude.

Secondly, Though they keep their own nature, yet *that* is employed for our good. When our Saviour came down, he took upon him a new nature: The Word was made fleſh, that he might dwell among

SERM. 23. among us; but these still continue pure *spirits*, and do their service without any change of constitution.

Thirdly, For this they are obliged to leave the realms of happiness and light. They are *sent forth*; not but that it is heaven wherever they go. They do not depart from the joy and glory that are bestowed upon their nature. However, the commission reaches to our world; there they must come, and there do their service.

Fourthly, It is to the whole body of the faithful; not ministers only, or Christians of a higher standing, but every one that has obtained mercy of the Lord is their charge. They had as much concern for Lazarus who died at a gate, as for David who breathed his last in a palace.

Fifthly, This is with regard to the purchase that Christ has made. For the people to whom they do these offices, are considered as *heirs of salvation*, the children of a King, the pensioners of a Conqueror.

Sixthly, Though believers are not actually in heaven, yet the thoughts of what they shall be have an influence upon the Angels; they minister to those who *shall be* the heirs of salvation, *i. e.* shall be possessed of it, and come to it as their great and last inheritance. What an esteem do they shew for Christ, when they are not ashamed of any whom he owns? Every drop of his blood is precious, every purchase of his grace is dear. Christians are beneath them in nature, but that is no matter, since they are united in the head. In pur-
Ps. xxxiv. 7. suance of these orders, *the Angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers them.* Having received a charge concerning us, in their hands they will bear us up, *lest at any time we dash our feet against a stone.*

5. Their attendance in our assemblies to see what is done there, is another argument of their concern in

in the design that our Redeemer came about. It is no force upon the imagination to suppose that they are looking on; we are charged to keep up an external decency *because of the Angels.* Now why should they who are blessed with a dwelling in God's house, and praise him there, come down to services so much beneath their own? What is there in our duties worth their beholding? Is it not an abusing of themselves to be among those who dwell in houses of clay, and whose devotions are as earthy and mouldring as their persons? and yet hither they come. SERM 23. 1 Cor. xi. 10.

They hear the doctrines of the pulpit, and see the behaviour of a congregation. Though they cannot look into your hearts, yet there is enough in your carriage that betrays what sort of principles are at work within. Your outward reverence to that name which is above every name, your delight in the law of the Lord, your *receiving the love of the truth,* are things within their observation. When Jacob went on his way, *the Angels of God met him;* for which reason he called the name of the place *Mahanaim,* because that was *God's host.* And before that, when he dreamed, he saw *a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it;* which makes him cry out, *How fearful is this place! this is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven!* Gen. xxxii. 2. ——xxviii. 12. 17.

We can make no such conclusions as these about any places, but we come to promote the work which Angels love. From our Gospel they learn the mysteries of the kingdom. *Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.* Not that we can tell them these things better than they know them; but nevertheless they are here as learners. They admire every place and company where the doctrines of the Gospel are opened. The history of our religion comprehends *the sufferings of Christ and* Eph. iii. 10 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

SERM. 23. *and the glory that ſhould follow, and theſe the Angels deſire to look into.* They are in a bending, ſearching, prying poſture.

Though they ſung at the making of the earth, and its ſeparation from the infolding waters, yet here is *a new ſong put into their mouths;* what is more entertaining, as it ſhews a greater act of wiſdom, and brings in a larger return of glory. And is it not good to inſiſt upon what they admire? Suppoſe they were to chooſe our ſubjects, what would they have us preach upon? Are they againſt *myſteries*, and things that belong to revealed reli-
1 Cor. ii. 7. gion? No; what they deſire to know, is *the manifold wiſdom of God; the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom that God ordained before the world to our glory.* There is nothing more
Eph. iii. 9. pleaſing to them than when miniſters *make all men ſee, what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery, that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.*

6. Their eſteem of Chriſt and the work he came about, is ſeen by their readineſs to take care of departing ſouls. There is ſomething of this which
Joh. xiv. 3. a Redeemer does in his own perſon: *I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am ye may be alſo.* The martyr Stephen was conſcious
Acts vii. 59. of this, when he cried out, *Lord Jeſus recieve my ſpirit.* But yet the Scripture has alſo told us, that the Angels do a kind and friendly part upon theſe
Luke xvi. 22. occaſions. *They carried Lazarus's ſoul into Abraham's boſom.* It is happy indeed, when the world below are ſhifting from us, they either can or will do us no more ſervice, *then* do theſe new acquaintance ſtep in. They will at laſt have the charge of collecting our duſt, and building up thoſe bodies that have been ſo long pulled in pieces. Nay, they are to ſort the dead, and take away the wicked from among the juſt. Though this will be the effect of the voice of the Son of man, he is to call over the graves that the ſlain may live; yet when he

he comes about this, it is *with his mighty Angels.* SERM. 23. *Michael the Archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses.* Jude 9. And as they take care that one part of a believer shall *rest in hope*, so they go with a readiness to shew the other *the path of life.*

7. We see their esteem of Christ and the work that he came about, by the welcome they give his people into the place of their own habitation. If they minister to those who *shall be* the heirs of salvation, before they take possession of their inheritance, what will they do when these happy persons have thrown off imperfection and mortality! It is said, at the resurrection we shall be *like the Angels*, or ἰσάγγελοι, equal to them. That is, we shall *die no more*, or live in that gross and carnal way that we do at present; we must be then as they have been always.—Thus you see how He who was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit, is seen of Angels; what a regard they have for his *person*, and with what a zeal they promote his *design:* And in these two particulars I have considered the first head, which was to *open* the expression, and shew you what is contained in it.

II. The next general head is this, that He who was thus seen of Angels is no other than *the Most High God;* and that we cannot have lower notions of *Him* without charging the guilt of idolatry upon *them.* It is pity that any who profess Christianity are uneasy to be told so, or that those opinions should grow into fashion, that make the *least* of a Saviour; that *for this name* of Christ ministers are to bear reproach, and to *suffer shame.* But whatever satisfaction some can give themselves in a faith that rests upon a creature, I hope there are many among you who will receive it as the glad tidings of salvation, when we say unto Zion, *Thy* GOD *reigneth.* This is, and I trust ever shall be, the language of our Gospel, whether men will hear,

SERM. 23. or whether they will forbear: *O Zion, that bring-*
Isa. xl. 9. *eſt good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jeruſalem, that bringeſt good tidings, lift up thy voice with ſtrength: lift it up, be not afraid: ſay to the cities of Judah, Behold your* GOD.

I have already argued it at large from the two former branches of the Myſtery of Godlineſs; and though it is a *wonder*, it is nevertheleſs to me a *truth*, that is dearer than all others; that He who was manifeſt in the fleſh, He who is juſtified in the Spirit, is a GOD; not merely by virtue of the office that he ſuſtained, but in the higheſt and moſt pro-
Pſal. xx. 5. per ſenſe of the word; and as *we rejoice in his ſalvation, ſo in the name of* OUR GOD *we will ſet up our banners.*

I ſhall now purſue the argument from what is further ſaid of him, that he was *ſeen of Angels.* Their homage is a great deal too much for any one but Him that made them; as you will find from the worſhip they pay him, the meditation they devote to him, their obedience to his commands, their attendance upon his perſon and his people. What they do each of theſe ways would be no better than idolatry, if it was given to a created nature.

1. The Scripture has expreſsly told us, that they worſhip him. The place I refer to is Heb. i. 6.
Heb. i. 6. *When he brings again the Firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* That the perſon here ſpoken of as deſigned for this honour was our bleſſed Lord, is above all diſpute, both from his being called the *Firſt-begotten*, and the reference there is to ſome particular period, in which he is ſaid to be *brought into the world.* Whether that is his incarnation or his aſcenſion, I ſhall not now enquire. It is plain enough that this comes in among his glories, that *all the Angels of God ſhall worſhip him.*

I

I know that the opinion which ſets bounds to the perfection of Chriſt, will do the ſame to the worſhip of Angels, and tell us this is not adoration. But how to talk of what Angels do, in any other than the words of Scripture, I know not. And ſurely thoſe people are not only ludicrous to men, but inſolent to the Angels, who will dare to interpret this action of theirs by another text, give fear to whom fear, and *worſhip to whom worſhip is due.* SERM. 23.

The Apoſtle gives us theſe words as a quotation out of the Old Teſtament, and they can ſignify no leſs in one place than they do in another. The paſſage you have Pſal. xcvii. 7. *Worſhip him, all ye gods.* What the Pſalmiſt calls *gods*, the Apoſtle calls the *Angels of God;* but as the phraſe of *worſhip* is what they both uſe, we muſt by no means make the ſenſe of it ſo different, that in the one it is *devotion*, in the other *civility*. For the Apoſtle to ſpeak of one perſon, and the Pſalmiſt of another, would make the quotation impertinent. How can he prove that Chriſt is better than the Angels, by a ſentence out of the Old Teſtament, when it is not to be underſtood of *Him?* How wide had this been from all the rules of argument, and how incapable of giving any conviction? If the Pſalmiſt does not ſpeak of a Redeemer, it could not be true that ſuch a thing *is ſaid* of him, Worſhip him all ye gods: and therefore we both may and muſt fetch the *ſenſe* from that Pſalm, out of which the Apoſtle fetches the *words*.

And who is it, whom thoſe gods, or thoſe Angels are to worſhip? See of whom he ſpeaks, try whether you can conceive of his Deity with any of thoſe diminutions that are ſo much applauded? It is He who reigns, for which *the earth muſt be glad, and the multitude of iſles rejoice: clouds are about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne; a fire goes before his face, and burns up his enemies round about: his lightnings enlightened*

SERM. 23. *lightened the world, the earth ſaw and trembled; the hills melted like wax at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the Lord of the whole earth; the heavens declare his righteouſneſs, and all the people ſee his glory. Confounded be all thoſe that ſerve graven images, that boaſt themſelves of idols: worſhip Him all ye gods.* HIM whoſe glory he had thus deſcribed.

This Pſalm muſt have a great deal of garbling, before the expreſſions can be made low enough for a creature. If David does not ſpeak of the Moſt High in this place, he does it no where. To ſay, that all theſe characters may be given to one who has not the Supreme Nature, is to ſay that God has *given his glory to another;* for no words can be more deſcriptive of his majeſty, than what are uſed on this occaſion. And to ſay, that though David ſpeaks of the Moſt High God, yet the Apoſtle tranſfers the characters to one who is no more than the firſt of creatures, is drawing him under a twofold guilt. *Firſt*, That he brings *that* into his argument which has no place there: he reaſons upon a falſehood; he affirms, that God has ſaid *that* of Chriſt which he never ſaid; and this in an Epiſtle to the Hebrews, who of all people were the moſt afraid of running into idolatry. Nay, *ſecondly*, There is ſomewhat worſe than this, that he is actually guilty of a robbery, and affirming that of a creature, which is peculiar to the Moſt High God. This is what the Supreme Nature never did alienate from itſelf; and therefore He, whom the Angels are appointed to worſhip, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, is *high above all the earth, and exalted far above all gods.*

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SERMON XXIV.

March 29. 1719.

2. THERE is another thing in our Saviour's being *seen of Angels*, that is an argument of his Divinity; and this may be deduced from their meditations of him. They throw in their beſt thoughts upon the ſubject of our redemption: *Theſe things the Angels deſire to look into.* They deſire it with the greateſt application and fervour; looking into them, ſignifies their attention and perſeverance in the ſtudy; and what are *theſe things?* The Apoſtle tells us, they are ſuch as the Prophets in former ages did miniſter to us, and ſuch as are now *reported by them that have preached the Goſpel;* and in the confirmation of which the *Holy Ghoſt is ſent down from heaven.* He had before given us the particulars under thoſe two heads, that comprehend all the articles of our religion, the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhall follow. This is what *the Spirit of Chriſt in the Prophets did teſtify before-hand:* This is the *ſalvation of which they enquired earneſtly;* and this is the *grace that is come unto us.* SERM. 24. 1 Pet. i. 12.

Now, merely to behold theſe ſufferings, and to gaze at the glory that came after them, cannot be all that the Angels do. Our Lord's enemies had a conviction of both theſe: they ſaw him die, and were aſtoniſhed at the evidence that was given of his reſurrection: *None of thoſe things were done in a corner.* But the *bending down* of the Angels to this ſubject, as the Greek word παρακύπτω ſignifies, Acts xxvi. 26.

muſt

SERM. 24. muſt be to a great deal more than matters of fact. They looked at his ſufferings and the following glory, as caſting an influence upon one another. That he ſuffered in ſuch a way, as to procure, to deſerve, and demand all the happineſs for himſelf and his people, that is comprehended in the great name of *glory*. They ſaw that the conſequence of his death was no leſs than the higheſt honour for himſelf, and a full portion for all believers, in every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Rev. v. 11, 12. John *beheld, and heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands, ſaying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.*

Now, is it poſſible that a creature ſhould be equal to ſuch a claim? How could the puniſhing of one that is innocent bring a pardon to them that are guilty? Why muſt his *taſting death* be *for every man?* How can we reconcile it to our notions of God's juſtice, which demands ſatisfaction for ſin? *firſt*, That this ſhould be exacted on one that *did not ſin;* and *ſecondly*, That it ſhould be diſcharged from thoſe that did nothing but ſin? If an innocent perſon ſhould *chooſe* to die, yet what has this to do with thoſe who *deſerve* to die? Their debt is never the leſs, except he that makes the ſatisfaction does alſo *receive* it.

And therefere, I do not at all wonder, that when people go off from the Deity of Chriſt, they make wretched work in explaining the ſtory of his death, and do what they can to ſink the imputation of his righteouſneſs. They will not allow that he died for his people as their ranſom and ſacrifice; and indeed I do not ſee how they can: for if he is a creature, let him be never ſo glorious, it would be an injury to *lay on him the iniquity of us all.* If it

was no more than the caſe of an Angel, how great must the hardſhip be for one of them to come down into our nature, to live ſo poor and low as Chriſt did, and at laſt to die under a curſe? Might not ſuch a one plead, 'Lord, why am I ſent upon this 'errand? if thou wilt ſave any of that wicked 'race, let it not be at my expence. It was not *my* '*law* that they broke; and therefore, if they muſt 'be the objects of thy love, do not bring it about 'by making me the mark of thine anger.' SERM. 24.

The higher any creature is above the Angels, the better would his argument have been againſt the fatigues and charges of this deſign. But it was *the Lawgiver* himſelf who made all the creation, and has a revenue of glory from it; it was He who came *under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of ſons. Gal. iv. 4. He had no neceſſity upon him from the command of a ſuperior, but ſpeaks like one at liberty, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* He then ſubmitted to take upon him a nature, that was to be ſupported, to be directed and controlled. When he came into the world, he ſaid, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me.* Heb. x. 5. He made himſelf *of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf.* Phil. ii. 7, 8. But,

Antecedent to his own reſolution, there was no government over him; and therefore the Apoſtle joins theſe two together, which cannot be underſtood of the ſame nature, but ſhews that the Perſon of whom he ſpeaks is to be conſidered with this variety, that he came of the Jews, *as concerning the fleſh*, but he is *over all, God bleſſed for evermore.* Rom. ix. 5. This is what the Angels deſire to look into, as the good people of old were taught to believe by a figure; when the Cherubims were drawn with their eyes towards one another, and towards the mercy-ſeat. This was to denote the wonder they felt

SERM. 24. felt at the myſtery of our redemption, and that what they looked at was the work of a God.

The mercy-ſeat was the throne of the Moſt High. We often read, that he *dwells between the Cherubims.* Their eyes were fixed on *him*, as carrying on a deſign of love, *the pleaſure of the Lord* that ſhould proſper in his hand. And if that figure, either in colours or gravings, was an emblem of their deſires to look into the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow, you ſee *with whom* their converſation was, that their eyes were repreſented as turned upon a God. We can hardly conceive, that they ſhould be ſo taken up in their eternity with the actions of a creature, or that they would think the humbling of one above them, ſo as to bring him a little below them, was a full amends to the juſtice of God, the avowance of his holineſs, or the magnifying of his law.

There is more diſhonour done to God by the ſin of man, than the death of all the Angels in heaven could be able to repair; and the reaſon is, becauſe the offence is offered to an Infinite Nature, and the recompence cannot be made by a finite one. Now, though Chriſt Jeſus is above them, yet if he is a creature, he is ſtill as far from infinite as they are. And therefore, when God ſpeaks of putting him to death, he calls it the awakening Zech. xiii. 7. of his ſword *againſt the man that was his fellow.* It was not enough that this perſon ſhould be innocent, an Angel had *that character* in him, and could have died the juſt for the unjuſt; but he muſt be *equal* to the party whom he came to ſatisfy, and then thoſe ſufferings had in them merit enough to claim all the glory that followed.

3. Their obedience to his commands is another argument of their regard to his Divinity; that as a GOD he is ſeen of Angels. Thus does the A- Heb. i. 7. poſtle ſpeak of Him and of them: *Of the Angels he ſaith, Who makes his Angels Spirits, and his miniſters*

niſters a flame of fire. To whom are they mini- SERM. 24.
ſters, but to Him that made them? He that gave them their ſpirituality, as ſo many flames of fire, is the only object of their veneration and duty. Well, the next words let us ſee which way their obedience is paid: *To the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.* Can any thing greater than this be ſaid of the Divine Majeſty?

Both theſe paſſages are taken out of the book of Pſalms: That concerning the Angels is in the 104th, where we read of God's eternal greatneſs; and it is mentioned as his nobleſt production of life, that he makes his Angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flaming fire. Had there been, as we are lately told, two creatures above them, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, why did not the Pſalmiſt begin with theſe, as a more exalted inſtance of what was done in the creation? It is apparent the ſcheme was not thought of in his day, but is reſerved for our later times.

The other paſſage is taken out of the 45th Pſalm, and the words muſt mean the ſame in one place, that they do in the other: *To the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The tranſlation that ſome have inſinuated, *God is thy throne for ever*, carries in it ſuch an uncertain ſound, that I cannot determine theſe words are the right ſenſe, till I find they bear any ſenſe at all. Angels have *thrones*, and they are called gods; and as their thrones are never to be deſtroyed, in that ſenſe they are *for ever and ever.* But is there not ſomething in the ſentence too great for them? We muſt take care that in bringing down the words by ſuch an interpretation, we do not rob the Apoſtle of his deſign; for he is ſhewing us, that ſomething is ſaid to the Son, which never was ſaid of the Angels. Nay, he goes on, *The ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.* You may bring

SERM. 24. these words low enough to understand them of David or Solomon; but can we imagine that the holy Spirit means no more?

The addition, *God, even thy God has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*, does only prove that our Saviour is to be considered in a lower created nature, which is what none denies: In that sense, he saith, *I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God:* Where he puts his relation to the Most High as his God and Father, upon the same grounds with that which his people have. But the Apostle here tells us, that he is God in that sense as to answer our highest notions of a Deity. THOU, LORD, *hast in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they shall all wax old, as does a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* These are things that were never mentioned of any but the most High God: That He is *the Creator of the ends of the earth, the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity;* that *the heavens are the Lord's*, and he is *without any variableness or shadow of turning.* And yet here they are plainly affirmed of Christ, and brought in as the reason, why the Angels should *worship* him, and be *ministring Spirits* to him. They can argue as much for their duty to the Son, as we can for ours to the Father: *He has made us, and not we ourselves; we are the work of his hands.*

Heb. i. 10, 11, 12.

To this the Scripture has given a happy testimony from a text that was never pretended to be dropt in copies, and cannot easily be mangled with criticism, Col. i. 14.—18. he speaks of the kingdom of *God's dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.* When we talk of *his blood*, we must consider him as a man like ourselves, capable of dying as we are. But

But from this he rises into other characters, that shew we are to regard him as an omnipotent Being: *By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the Head of the body the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.* SERM. 24

I do not remember a text in all the Bible where the work of creation is laid down in more lofty particulars. Here you see the foundation of that duty which the Angels ever pay him. The things said to be done *by him* are never mentioned as the work of a creature. When the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, it was with this question: *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?* and the reverence it produced from that good man was, *I know that* THOU *canst do every thing.* But the particulars mentioned by the Apostle are greater than those with which God fills his argument to Job. We read of things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible: thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. These, I suppose, must be understood of those exalted Beings that are placed in such dignities. By thrones, we may conceive of the Angels that sit upon them; by dominions and principalities, the inhabitants above who have these honours belonging to them. Well, all things both above and below were created *by him, and for him.* Job xxxviii. 4. —xlii. 2

There is an answer to this argument, That things were created by Jesus Christ as an *instrument;* that is a wooden word indeed, and people must be very ready to part with the text, and their senses too, before they can let the evidence of so plain a scripture be turned off in that manner: it is talking by no rules of language. Will any one call the

SERM. 24. the Lord Mayor of London the King's inſtrument, becauſe by him he governs the city? Is not this *darkening counſel by words without knowledge?* But the weight of the argument is ſtill heavier upon them, when it is ſaid, that all things were not only created by him, but *for him.* Now, we know that the Lord has made all things *for himſelf.* We are not able to conceive of the Moſt High in greater
Heb. ii. 10. apprehenſions than thoſe, That He is *the God for whom are all things, and by whom are all things:*
Rom. xi. 36. that *of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.*

It would be blaſphemy to ſay this of any other beſides himſelf. It is the language of their praiſes in heaven. The four and twenty elders fall down
Rev. iv. 10, 11. before him that ſits upon the throne, and *worſhip him that lives for ever and ever, and caſt their crowns before the throne.* Theſe are deſcriptions of the utmoſt reverence they can pay; and what they ſay with all this ſolemnity is, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created.* Where is the difference between thoſe profeſſions and adorations, and what is here expreſsly ſaid of Chriſt Jeſus, that all things were created *by him* and *for him?* How come the words on earth to be underſtood of a creature, when they in heaven give them to none but the Creator? How comes one text to ſignify a Supreme Agent, and another, without any diminution of language, to be no more than a lofty account of an inſtrument? Such blundering work will people make of it, when their reaſons are too *great* to receive a myſtery, and too *little* to explain it. No wonder that ſuch an uſage of revelation prepares
2 Pet. ii. 2. the world to deſpiſe it all. For when many *follow theſe pernicious ways the way, of truth is evil ſpoken of.*

4. The

4. The attendance the Angels give to the person and people of a Redeemer, furnishes out another argument for his Divinity: *They are all ministring Spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation.* This is for his sake. Though in the same chapter they are called ministring Spirits both to Him and to us, we cannot possibly give the words the same interpretation. All their offices of care and goodness are not only an act of friendship to believers, but of obedience to our Lord. Thus Daniel tells the king: *My God has sent his Angel to shut the lions mouths:* and Gabriel himself owns, *The commandment came forth, and I was caused to flee swiftly.* We read of his *giving the Angels a charge over us.* Our Saviour in his humiliation saith, He could *pray the Father, who would presently send him more than twelve legions of Angels.* And when they minister to the heirs of salvation, they are *sent* to do *it;* which supposes that their tenderness about us is all along carried on with a regard to Him that is over them. SERM. 24. Heb. i. 14. Dan. vi. 22. —— ix. 23. Ps. xci. 11.

Now, who is this Person, and how do they behave towards him? We find, Isa. vi. 1. that the prophet *saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.* His train's filling the temple must refer to the work of salvation that he came about. Whether it is to be understood of his human nature, which is called *the temple of his body*, or the house of God at Jerusalem, *the city of the great King*, I shall not now enquire. The words are true in both senses; for when *the desire of all nations came, he filled the house with glory.* His throne that was high and lifted up, is to be understood of something greater than what he did upon earth: *Above this throne stood the Seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.* Hag. ii. 7.

Was

SERM. 24. Was not the ſolemnity of this attendance, hiding their faces as unable to look, their feet as unworthy to ſtand, and ſtretching their wings as ready to go, too much for a creature? Could they have done any more to him that made them? It is evident, they do not talk of him as one between themſelves and the throne of God, as the Father's Deputy and Vicegerent, but cry *of* him in a way that ſome people would not have us cry *to* him: *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of thy glory.* This is the repeated attribute in hea-
Rev. iv. 8. ven, *Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* And though there is a great deal of pains taken to ſhew us, that the government over the earth may be committed to one that is not God by nature, yet this expreſſion, *The whole earth is full of thy glory*, carries in it thoſe
Pſ. viii. 1. praiſes that are aſcribed to the Moſt High: *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name above all the*
— civ. 24. *earth!* and again, *The earth is full of thy riches.*

The poſts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the houſe was filled with ſmoke. This, you will ſay, might be the work of a creature: an Angel was able to do ſo much; but however, it is elſewhere mentioned as an inſtance of
Acts iv. 24. omnipotence: *They ſaid, Lord, thou art God, who*
29, 30. *haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is; grant unto thy ſervants, that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word, by ſtretching out thy hand to heal, that ſigns and wonders may be done in the name of thy holy child Jeſus.* No doubt of it, they here apply to the Father, and it is obſerved as a thing not unworthy of HIM, that *when they had prayed, the place was ſhaken, where they were aſſembled together.* That ſmoke, which came into Solomon's temple, is called *the glory of the Lord.* With regard to which it is ſaid, that he would *dwell in the thick darkneſs;* ſo that ſuch expreſſions as theſe, *The poſts of the door moved at the*

voice of him that ſpake, and the houſe was filled with ſmoke, are brought in as the work of Omnipotence in other places of Scripture, whatever they may be allowed to ſignify here. SERM. 24.

We can eaſily imagine how the admirers of the new ſcheme would underſtand what happened; but let us enquire what Iſaiah ſays of it, who lived a long while before our age of liberty and politeneſs. And we find, in the

Firſt place, That he dare not uſe the name of a Redeemer, and the myſtery of ſalvation, with the freedom that is now contended for, but rather cries out, *Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips.* Very different from the language of thoſe who ſpeak *proud things, and whoſe lips are their own.* It is a ſign he either ſaw too much, or they ſee too little; which ſhews us, by the way, that the more we know of Chriſt Jeſus, the greater reverence ſhall we uſe in ſpeaking of him. If ever the light of the glorious Goſpel breaks out among us, the particular confeſſion of that day will be *the uncleanneſs of our lips.* However,

Secondly, He gives you the ground of this lamentation: *Mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts.* If the word King may ſignify an office, yet the other title, the Lord of hoſts, is uſed ſo often, that we ſhould think it a ſacred name. Well, *One of the Seraphims flew to him, and laid a live coal upon his mouth, ſaying, Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy ſin is purged.* This muſt be by a commiſſion from Him, *with whom alone is forgiveneſs.* After this, he *heard the word of the Lord, ſaying, Whom ſhall I ſend? and who will go for us?* that Lord who ſat upon the throne, and is called by the Angels, the Lord of hoſts. And HE *ſaid, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, and perceive not*, &c.

Now can any text in the Bible expreſs more duty and attendance than the Angels here are ſaid to

SERM. 14. to give? and yet that it may be secure from all plunder of modern interpretations, the Evangelist has quoted these very words, with this remark upon them, *These things said Esaias, when he saw* HIS *glory and spake of* HIM; that is of Christ Jesus: For the story is this, that *though* HE *had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on* HIM, *that the saying of Esaias the Prophet might be fulfilled, saying, Who has believed our report? And again, they could not believe, because Esaias had said, He has blinded their eyes,* &c. *These things said Esaias, when he saw* HIS *glory, (i. e.* in the year that king Uzziah died), *and spake of* HIM: The very same God, who being manifest in the flesh, and dwelling among us, *though he was in the world, and the world was made by him, yet the world knew him not.*

John xii. 40, 41.

Thus you see this was a doctrine long enough before *creeds* were ever thought of; and if we would build upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, it must be by a *good confession* of what they have told us. I may plead, as the Apostle does in a lower case, *Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?* As the ministry we have received is concerning Him who is *the true God, and eternal life,* so *having obtained mercy we faint not* under all reproach and hardship, but *renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,* the sculking artifice of those who have no pleasure in the truth, who have designs that they dare not own. *We walk not in craftiness, nor handle the word of the Lord deceitfully, but by a manifestation of the truth,* and *that* the greatest truth of our religion, *commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and if this Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*

1 John v. 20.

2 Cor. iv. 2, 3.

III. The next general head is to consider it as a MYSTERY, that our God should be seen of Angels;

gels; and though this is objected againſt the doctrine, and makes people look on it as *fooliſhneſs*, yet that need be no ſurpriſe; ſo it ever was, and ſo it ever will be, as long as *the carnal mind is enmity againſt God.* *We ſpeak wiſdom among them that are perfect: Howbeit not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom which God has ordained before the world unto our glory.* You ſee of what nature our doctrine is, and how claſhing it muſt be with the pride of human reaſon; and therefore when perſons are ſo very merry upon a Chriſtian's believing what he does not underſtand, and repreſent all that faith as irrational and enthuſiaſtic, one would think they never read what the Apoſtle ſaith, *That the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, but they are fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

SERM. 24.

1 Cor. ii. 6, 7.

14.

How poorly muſt my text look in the Bible, which is here introduced with a heavenly pomp, *Without controverſy, Great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*, if by *Myſtery* we are to underſtand ſomething that is *not wonderful*, and by a *Great Myſtery* what is no more than a rational ſyſtem! and though it is ſaid to be myſterious *without controverſy*, yet it ſhall be a controverſy, whether it is any myſtery at all? The glorious doctrines that are wrapt up in this account ſhall be denied, becauſe they are what the Scripture tells us they ſhould be, the Great Myſteries of Godlineſs. Alas! whither are we running! Do you think God would deliver himſelf with all this preparation, and talk of *Great Myſteries*, when he deſigned to tell us no more than what we might have had without any revelation?

That Chriſt was manifeſt in the fleſh, is true, for he was made of a woman; but take off his

SERM. 24. Deity from the report, and where is the myſtery of it? It was none to the Jews; when he tells them, *Ye know not whence I am*, they were ready to anſwer him in the negative. *His father, and mother, and brethren we know, and how ſaith he then, I came down from above?* People may wrangle as long as they will, but if our religion is both deſcribed and recommended to us as a *Great Myſtery*, the myſteriouſneſs of any one doctrine in it can be no objection, becauſe it agrees to what is ſaid of the whole. Now this part of the ſtory, that he was ſeen of Angels is wonderful, in that they admired a Saviour whom they did not need, and regarded him in a nature below their own.

1. This was a Saviour of whom they had *no need*, for they never ſinned. I uſe theſe words in a comparative ſenſe, *i. e.* they had not ſuch occaſion for a Redeemer as we have; for it is ſuppoſed, and that with a great deal of evidence, that they are now confirmed by him, and fixed in a happineſs of which there will be no ſhadow of turning. Hence they are called by one of our names, *the elect Angels*, as choſen of God, not to be redeemed, but only to be aſſured of what they have already.

Now is it not a wonder, that they who never knew either guilt or miſery, any otherwiſe than by looking on, ſhould ſo admire a deſign that only comprehends them at the ſecond-hand? Religion and the great intereſt of Chriſtianity is recommended to us, by ſuch arguments as theſe: *I have made known to thee excellent things*, ſaith Solomon, *even to thee. This is not a vain thing*, ſaith Moſes, *becauſe it is your life:* We are called to *work out our own ſalvation.* But none of theſe reaſons can have an influence upon the Spirits about the throne; they being made with a purity, always kept it; and yet theſe are things that *the Angels deſire to look into. Behold ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.*

Prov. xxii. 20.
Deut. xxxii. 47.
Phil. ii. 12.
Acts xiii. 41.

periſh. How will you eſcape, if you neglect this great ſalvation! they admire the way of happineſs that was contrived for your nature, and yet you refuſe it. Will not all the wiſdom of that upper world be directed againſt you? *Call now, if there be any that will anſwer thee, and to which of the ſaints wilt thou turn?* SERM 24. Job v. 1.

2. It farther enhances this wonder, that they ſhould pay ſo much regard to one who came down into a nature beneath their own. The ſin of the devils was *pride*, which ſome have imagined, (and they can do no more than imagine it), ſhewed itſelf by refuſing offices of ſervice to mankind. Whether it is ſo or no, the Scripture has not told us; but it is very apparent, the elect Angels are filled with no ſuch temper. They have loved the place of our dwelling, for *they ſung together* at the making of the earth, and *ſhouted for joy* that there were creatures below themſelves. We were then *a little lower* than the Angels, to ſhew us that it was no great condeſcenſion for them to have communion with a nature ſo well made. But when it is ſaid of our bleſſed Lord, that he was *lower than the Angels*, there the words ſignify a greater diſtance from them. — xxxviii. 7.

If you underſtand the Pſalmiſt of Adam, his inferiority to the Angels was conſiſtent with immortality; but Chriſt was made *lower than they for the ſuffering of death.* The diſtance between that frail and troubleſome life that *he* ſubmitted to, and *their* happineſs, is inconceiveable by us, who know ſo little what it is to be like them. Now if they regarded our nature in perfection, as that which was not much beneath them, is it not a wonder they look at it in a perſon who calls himſelf *a worm and no man!* But they ſaw in him ſomething above the Angels, as well as beneath them. They knew *that he had by inheritance a more excellent name than they.* See Him therefore, who had Heb. ii. 9. Pſ. xxii. 6.

SERM. 24. had been deſpiſed and rejected of men, admired by the Angels of God. He whom *the builders refuſed*, the wiſe and learned men had ſet at nought, Mat. xxi. 42. *as a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence*,—He is the head of the corner. He is in a place which the Angels give way to let him take; for *to none of them has he put in ſubjection the world to come.* This is what the Scripture has delivered to us as a myſtery, both in the Old and New Teſtament. *It is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

April 12. 1719.

SERMON XXV.

I HAVE no more to do upon this branch of the Chriſtian Religion, than to ſhew you how it is a Myſtery of GODLINESS; that, like all the reſt, it makes us better, and brings forth fruit to account. That you may conſider this in a diſtinct way, I ſhall lead you into the two heads of practical holineſs, our *duty* and our *comfort*; and let you ſee, that each of theſe receive a happy influence from what is ſaid of Chriſt Jeſus in my text, that he *was ſeen*, or admired and adored, *of Angels.*

1. The belief of this gives life and ſoul to our *duty.* It is a doctrine according to godlineſs, becauſe from hence we are inſtructed in our worſhip and reverence to a Redeemer, a couragious profeſſion of his name, a dependence upon his grace as ſufficient for us, and a care and love to his people. Theſe, you know, are ſo many *beauties of holineſs*, by

by which we *adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour;* and whatever brings us into such a practice, must do a friendly part to our religion. It is thus that we *shew forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into a marvellous light.* You will find that our Lord's being seen of Angels, is a suitable and powerful argument, as will appear by going over the particulars. SERM. 25.

(1.) We are called to the worship and reverence of Him who is our Redeemer. All believers, *in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.* This indeed supposes that he is GOD, otherwise no fulness from a creation, no acquired glories would make him equal to it; for we *go on in the strength of the Lord, and make mention of his righteousness, even of his only.* David had *none in heaven but the Most High God,* and no more have we. He alone was to be the *strength of his heart, and his portion for ever;* and all that *went a whoring from him, were to perish.* Every act of worship that is not directed to the Supreme Being, is no better than adultery, a breach of our faith, and a provocation to his jealousy. It is a principle of natural religion, that none but God is to be worshipped; and it is never to be destroyed by any revelation, unless we suppose that God gives up a glory by the Gospel, which he always kept to himself under the Law. 1 Cor. i. 2. Ps. lxxi. 16. —lxxiii. 25, 26, 27.

I have shewn you under the former head, that the Angels pay their fullest and most proper devotion to Him who is *the King of Saints.* I considered the scriptures that tell us so, without any force upon the words, in their plain and easy sense. I made use of no human interpretations to give them a bias, but laid them before you without any artifice, comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and I think, that from this it appears in its native evidence, *that all the Angels of God* do worship him;

Him

SERM. 25. Him who came into the world, and is gone to the Father.

What an argument is this for us to come *under the law to Chriſt!* Well may we ſay of Him as Pe-
Acts x. 36. ter does to Cornelius, *He is Lord of all.* Not merely by conſtitution, but antecedent to his appearing in our nature, and collecting to himſelf ſuch a ful-
Joh. xvii. 5. neſs of merit. He had *a glory with the Father before the world was.* Though the Apoſtle takes no-
Rom. ix. 5. tice that he came of the Jews, *according to the fleſh*, yet he is *over all, God bleſſed for ever, Amen.* Certainly he does not ſpeak of the one as conſequential upon the other; that becauſe he came of the Jews, therefore he is above the Angels; and I cannot imagine why ſuch a title does not carry as much in it, as the ſame words, chap. i. 25.; when ſpeaking of the Gentiles, he ſaith, *They ſerve the creature more than the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever, Amen.* He ſets his *Amen* to them both. That very name which he gives the Moſt High God, and by which he is diſtinguiſhed from all the idols in the creation, is, that he is *over all;* as if that was the greateſt he could ſay of him: And muſt it ſignify a ſupremacy of nature in one place, and only an eminent exaltation in another? Shall the words, *over all, bleſſed for ever*, be the title both of a God and a creature? Theſe claſhes of interpretation upon the ſame phraſe make our Apoſtle guilty of what he abhors and condemns, *uttering words not eaſy to be underſtood*, which he calls *ſpeaking to the air*, and that in a matter where a miſtake is moſt fatal.

Here you ſee your company, who they are that lead on the worſhip of *Meſſiah the Prince.* We may call upon them as the firſt rank of ſervants,
Pſ. ciii. 20, 21, 22. *Praiſe him, all ye Angels, that excel in ſtrength, ye miniſters of his that do his pleaſure: bleſs him all ye his hoſts, and ——praiſe this Lord, O my ſoul.* The Apoſtle ſpeaks of the devotion that Chriſt has above,

bove, as an univerſal thing, that it runs through the creation, it reaches as far as religion itſelf does; wherever there is any worſhip, He has it. *In the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* The argument loſes none of its force from the laſt expreſſion; for it is certain, that all the duty we pay to Chriſt is to the glory of God the Father. When *the Son of man is glorified, God is glorified in him; and if God is glorified in him, God does alſo glorify him in himſelf.* But the queſtion is, whether this bowing the knee, and confeſſing with the tongue, does not go as far as either ours or the angelic nature can do in a way of homage.

SERM. 25.

Phil. ii. 10, 11.

John xiii. 31, 32.

That you may take the full meaning of theſe words, obſerve their ſituation in other parts of Scripture. They are plainly fetched out of Iſa. xlv. 22, 23. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved all the ends of the earth.* Whether this is the Father, or the Son that calls, the argument is ſtill the ſame; becauſe the reaſon he gives for the dependence of the whole world is this, *I am the* LORD, *and there is none elſe.* That is the character which he maintains, and will not part with: *I have ſworn by myſelf, and the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return: that unto* ME *every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear.* You ſee in this reſolution, he declares himſelf to be *God*, and that there is *none elſe;* and ſhall this homage be paid to another which he demands to himſelf as the *only God?* Can we imagine, after ſuch a declaration of his being *alone* in the Deity, that he would alienate any of that honour which he ſpeaks of here as his peculiar?

Nay, methinks this is mentioned as belonging to Chriſt with great enlargements; for by the Prophet it is only demanded from *the ends of the earth*, every

SERM. 25. every knee, and every tongue *there* have their duty alloted them; but *here* we read of *things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth*, that they are all bowing and praiſing. The Apoſtle in his Epiſtle to the Romans, makes theſe accounts ſignify our appearance at his tribunal: *We ſhall ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. For it is written, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. So then, every one of us ſhall give an account of himſelf to God.* Standing before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, is giving an account of ourſelves to God, and the proof we have of it, are thoſe words out of the Old Teſtament, which are plainly affirmed of a Redeemer in the New.

Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

See therefore how you ought to conſider your great Saviour, and with what a compaſs a believer may ſend out his ſummons. *Praiſe him from the heavens, praiſe him in the heights; praiſe him, all ye his Angels, praiſe him, all ye his hoſts. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who haſt ſet thy glory above the heavens!* What a pattern is here for your duty? Well may they that *ſtand upon a ſea of glaſs*, and have got the victory over the beaſt and his name, cry out as they do, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints! who would not fear thee, and glorify thy name?* Do what you find the Angels have always done; *Obey his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words;* bow before him with reverence and a godly fear. *Give glory to Him who is worthy to be praiſed;* and be ſure to come into the great concert. *Every creature that is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that is in them, heard I, ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power be to Him that ſits on the throne, and to the* LAMB *for ever and ever.*

Pſ. cxlviii. 1, 2.

—viii. 1.

Rev. xv. 3, 4.

Pſ. ciii. 20.

Rev. v. 13.

(2.) Another

(2.) Another act of our duty is a couragious profeſſion of his name. It is not enough that *with the heart man believes unto righteouſneſs*, but *confeſſion muſt be made to ſalvation:* Therefore *if thou believe in thine heart the Lord Jeſus, and confeſs with thy mouth that God raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* This ſuppoſes that the acknowledgment of the myſtery carries in it a danger. We are told of times when people *would not endure ſound doctrine;* and miniſters are either to quit their Goſpel or their reputation. If they will not bring down revelation to mens reaſon, and the rules of life to their luſts, they ſhall have the run of hell and earth againſt them. *Briars and thorns are with them, and they dwell among ſcorpions.* We are bid not to be *diſmayed at their looks.* None of us is ſufficient for theſe things. SERM. 25. Rom. x. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 3. Ezek. ii. 6.

The Apoſtle thought it needful to exhort Timothy in an evil day, *Be not thou aſhamed of the teſtimony of the Lord, nor of me his priſoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Goſpel, according to the power of God;* and in the ſame Epiſtle he takes notice of the different carriage he had met with among profeſſors. He ſaith of Oneſiphorus, *He ſought me out diligently, and was not aſhamed of my chain.* But every one had not that integrity, *At his firſt anſwer, all men forſook him, no man ſtood by him;* and as he begs that couragious profeſſor might *find mercy of the Lord in that day*, ſo he prays God for the reſt of them, that it *might not be laid to their charge.* 2 Tim. i. 8. ch. iv. 16.

The Scripture has expreſſed a great deal of value for what we do in teſtimony to the ways and cauſe of a Redeemer under the ſtrife of tongues. He ſays to a church at Pergamos, *Thou heldeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith.* When that name was going, they renewed their catch, and took faſter hold of it. The ſame is obſerved of thoſe in Philadelphia, *I know thy works, I have ſet* Rev. ii. 13. ch. iii. 8.

SERM. 25. *before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it; for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name;* and he bids them
Rev. iii. 11. continue ſo, *Behold I come quickly, hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown.*

To this glorious part of our duty, we are led by the conſideration of what the Angels do. They were not aſhamed of him in the wilderneſs when he hungred, and in the garden when he fainted; they made no ſecret of his perfections; they come out as the armies of heaven againſt the *dragon* and his angels, who aſſail a Redeemer's throne. See therefore what a number of profeſſors you have to go before you. Remember the terror of that threat-
Luke ix. 26. ning, *Whoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* Obſerve here the nature of our temptation; the oppoſition we receive is from adulterers and ſinners; the former are in jeſt with all religion, and the latter are in earneſt againſt it; ſo that from ſuch a mixture you may expect a trial of *cruel mockings;* and if they can reach to it, *of ſcourgings, and bonds, and impriſonments.*

Carnal ſecurity will plead with a great deal of reaſon againſt the dangers of a profeſſion then. 'What ſignifies ſpeaking for Chriſt in a lewd and 'ſcandalous age? I ſhall only be laughed at.' Well, but if God has placed you among theſe people, he expects you ſhall appear for him. It is not enough that you ſay I love a Saviour, I am not weary of him; the crime here mentioned, is being *aſhamed of him.* Perhaps you will ſay, that you are not, you value his perſon, and ſpeak well of his name. Well, but if you are aſhamed of *his words*, of the revelation that he has given, it is all the ſame thing. You are to ſtick by his doctrine againſt all the ſneer and banter of ungodly men; and if you do not, he will

will look as shy upon you, as you do upon him; SERM 25.
and that at a time when you will want to be owned; he will be *ashamed of you before the Angels*, and tell them, 'There stands a sneaking professor, 'one who held the truth in unrighteousness, who 'was more tender of his own name than he was 'of mine; he had rather my glory should suffer 'a robbery than his own reputation a blot. De-'spise him, O ye Angels, let not such a coward 'come into the armies of heaven: Let *the fearful* Rev. xxi. 8.
'*and unbelieving*, and abominable and murderers, 'and all liars, have their part in the lake that burns 'with fire and brimstone.' But how glorious is the reverse to this sentence, *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the Angels of God!* for the King himself to own you in the face of the whole Court, to tell the surrounding Angels, 'There is one who forgot 'every interest but Mine, and every friend but 'Me; receive him among yourselves, he as well 'as you has *kept the word of God, and testimony of* 1 Pet. i. 7.
'*Jesus!*'

Thus the *trial of your faith* will be *found unto praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* What signifies bowing to the humour of those who *despise that worthy name by which you are called?* Jam. ii. 7.
What is their favour worth? This *praise of men*, that you love more than the praise of God, is nothing but a little putrified breath: But give all things the reputation they will have at last, and it is enough if the zeal that is now condemned comes then to be admired. *With me it is a very small* 1 Cor. iv.
thing that I should be judged of man's judgment; 3, 5.
but the Lord will come, and bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God. 'May my soul be under those powers 'of a world to come, and act in the whole pro-'fession of a Minister and a Christian, with a view

'to

SERM. 25. ‘ to ſuch an acknowledgment before the Angels of ‘ heaven.’

(3.) From his being ſeen of Angels, in the way that I have deſcribed, we are encouraged in our dependence upon his grace, as that which is *ſufficient for us.* They admire him as *worthy to receive honour, and glory, and ſtrength, and ſalvation, and power, and bleſſing;* as one who by the blood of his croſs has *reconciled unto himſelf things in heaven, and things on earth,* and therefore here is enough for our confidence.

Rev. v. 13.

To this purpoſe, I would lead your thoughts to a ſcripture that has really ſuffered by our tranſlation, and ought to have the ſenſe of it retrieved. It is Col. i. 19. He ſpeaks there of Chriſt Jeſus, as having *in all things the pre-eminence,* or the government among all perſons; and then ſaith, *for it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* Thus we read it in our Bible, but there is no ſuch word as *Father* in the Greek. Ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησε πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι, All fulneſs pleaſed to dwell in him; or, it pleaſed himſelf, all fulneſs ſhould dwell there. For we find the following verſes return the ſeveral actions upon himſelf, though our tranſlation having made a miſtake in one clauſe, carries it through the reſt. Καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτὸν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ· εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. That word εἰρηνοποιήσας, *making peace,* may be affirmed of Chriſt, of whom it is further ſaid, that δι' αὐτοῦ, *by himſelf, he reconciles all things,* εἰς αὐτὸν, *to himſelf. Nay, in the body of his fleſh through death, he is to preſent you holy and blameleſs, and unreproveable,* κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, *in his own ſight.*

So that, though the doctrine of the ſame perſon's both *making* and *receiving* ſatisfaction is laughed at, yet it is the plain language of this text, as well as ſeveral others. *He preſents us to himſelf;* he keeps us from falling, *and preſents us in the preſence of his own*

Eph. v. 27. Jude 24.

own glory with exceeding joy. He *reconciles* things in heaven; if you underſtand that of the Angels, it ſignifies a confirmation in the original happineſs of their nature: and He who could eſtabliſh them can *pardon* you. If there is grace enough to keep the Angels from falling, as ſeveral thouſands of their partners have done, certainly there is ſufficient to keep you by the mighty power of this God *through faith unto ſalvation.* SERM. 25.

(4.) Here is an argument for your care and love to the people of a Redeemer. If the Angels for his ſake are *ſent forth as miniſtring ſpirits* to them, will you think it below you to love and attend them? Remember they are *heirs of ſalvation*, the children of a King, *joint-heirs with Chriſt*, the price of blood, the candidates for glory. The Spirits that ſtand round the throne do not think it any reproach to come down among them. *They encamp round about them that fear the Lord, to deliver them.* It is ſtrange, that the heavenly guards ſhould pitch their tents upon earth, and do it, not where God's people lived in proſperity, but they go to the pooreſt perſon, and into the darkeſt holes. They are employed to ſhut *the lion's mouth in a den*, to fetch an Apoſtle out *of a dungeon*, to take up a *beggar* perhaps from a rich man's gate. The laſt news we heard of Lazarus, was, that no creature owned him beſides the *dogs who licked his ſores*; and the next account tells us, he is in the arms of Angels to carry up his ſoul. Pſ. xxxiv. 7.

See therefore how aukward a thing that loftineſs of temper is, that ſome people love to be diſtinguiſhed by. They never learned this from the Angels. It is not the Court-air. It is quite out of faſhion in heaven, to *deſpiſe one of theſe little ones, for their Angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven.* They have creatures to take care of them, who look God in the face. Let theſe noble examples teach you, as *the elect* Col. iii. 12.

SERM. 25. *elect of God, to put on bowels of mercy, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* Learn thus to be generous, to be pitiful and courteous, going about like ſo many Angels upon earth, doing good to all men, eſpecially as they do, *to the houſehold of faith.*

2. We learn from our Lord's being ſeen of Angels what will be matter of *comfort* to us, under any dangers by a profeſſion, any troubles for the imperfection of grace, our concern in a dying hour, and our unbelief about a reſurrection and a future happineſs.

(1.) We may be expoſed to great dangers in our profeſſion, as I have already ſuppoſed. It is your duty to *ſtand faſt in the faith, to quit yourſelves like men, and be ſtrong;* and if we had no more for it, than the word of our General and Captain of ſalvation, *Have not I commanded you?* it is enough to a good ſoldier of Chriſt. But he has not left himſelf without a witneſs; we have arguments of another ſort: For as the *battle is the Lord's*, ſo in a little while you ſhall know the joys of thoſe that *divide the ſpoil.* This flows from every fountain of doctrine, all the truths of religion are to give you a *hope in believing;* but there is a particular force in the ſubject of my text.

You appear for Him who has all the Angels in heaven to appear for him. You do not ſee either him or them, that would confound your zeal, and prevent your faith; but they are about you, though inviſible. The Prophet Eliſha knew this: when his ſervant ſaw the chariots and horſes invading the city, he cries out, *Alas, my maſter! how ſhall we do?* He has this anſwer, *Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them.* He might have ſaid, there is a greater force with us, if he had ſpoken of no more than one Angel; but he really inſiſts upon a *greater number*, as appeared to be fact; for when the young man's eyes were

2 Kings vi. 15, 16.

were opened, *behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha.* Indeed the Apostle goes upon a higher argument than this, *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.* And shall they who profess under so glorious a Head, and are joined with so noble an army, be ashamed of what they do? No, we have *a High-priest over the house of God;* one who has the government there, for he is *a Priest upon his throne.* From this the Apostle makes two conclusions: *first*, That we *draw nigh with a true heart*; and, *secondly*, That we *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* The one of these is as necessary as the other. A man is as much obliged to keep standing in the field, as kneeling to the throne: and what are we to hold fast? not only our faith, as a principle, or a doctrine, but the *very profession* of it, ἀκλινῆ, without wavering, without any declension or turning from the truth as it is in Jesus. This is a part of your homage to that High-priest who is over the house of God.

SERM. 25.

1 Joh. iv. 4.

Heb. x. 21, 22.

Remember, therefore, if you *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*, you have a good cause, a glorious Head, and a vast alliance: And though there are many who *turn away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables*, yet *watch in all things, endure afflictions.* For there is *a crown of righteousness* laid up for all those who *love his appearing.* And what appearing is that, but of *a righteous judge?* All Scripture agrees in this, *The heavens declare his righteousness, for God is judge himself.* We come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of all; and therefore, when we look for that *blessed hope, it is the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.* You may well bear a testimony to the character under which you expect him. *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold*

2 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

Psal. l. 6.

Jude 14, 15, 16.

SERM. 25. *the Lord comes with ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince them of their ungodly deeds, and hard ſpeeches which they have ſpoken againſt him. Theſe are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own luſts; and their mouth ſpeaks great ſwelling words, having mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage.*

(2.) We are ſometimes troubled at the imperfection of our graces, and the darkneſs of our evidence; and this ſits heavier upon a believer, than all the noiſe and rattle of the world againſt him. He does not complain ſo much, that *without are fightings*, as that *within are fears*. Now the doctrine I am upon, opens *a door of hope in this valley of Achor*, and it is this, that though Chriſt do ſuffer your graces to be weak, and your comforts to be interrupted, yet He that has done ſo much for the Angels will not be unmindful of *you*.

In ſome ſenſe we may ſuppoſe them under the fears of falling away. They had *no covenant* ordered in all things and ſure, until he *reconciled* to himſelf what is now in heaven. Now there is one argument, that may encourage our expectation of ſuch a favour above theirs. We may ſay, as the men of Iſrael did to thoſe of Judah, *We have ten parts in the king, he is nearer of kin to us:* Heb. ii. 16. He is *rather* ours than theirs; for *verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of Abraham.* And therefore if he has done ſo generouſly by a nature that he never took into the relation, what may not we hope for from him who took part of our fleſh and blood? Do not imagine that He who eſtabliſhed *them* has left his people here below unſettled; no, the time is a coming on, when your graces ſhall be like thoſe of the Angels, entire and perfect, and when your comforts ſhall alſo equal theirs, both in their fulneſs and ſecurity.

3. This

(3.) This is a support under the terrors of a dying hour. The believer may say, 'This is what I am 'not used to, I have had grace to hear and to 'pray with, but never to die with. This is fol- 'lowing my God *in a way that is not known*, and a 'road that I have not trod. Now my feet are 'coming *upon the dark mountains*. I am to find 'that which never entered into my experience be- 'fore, and never will do again. I have often re- 'sisted Satan, but if the last battle turns on his 'side, all the rest will prove in vain.' I do not tell you such a case ought not to strike you with awe. A man that makes a jest of death, was never in earnest for heaven: But this I will tell you, from Him whose word alone you are to take in it, that He whose you are, will never leave you nor forsake you. SERM. 25.

Angels have been your *ministring Spirits* before, and they will be so at last. You have found their care in a pinching world, you shall have it again. Satan will be your enemy; it is the concluding stroke, and therefore may be the most awful. But here are contending Spirits that will give him battle, and they are sent forth to minister unto them who shall be the heirs of salvation. This they have done all along; but their service is with a particular zeal, when those *heirs* are just going to take possession. If they owned you in a distant title, in a claim that was not to be answered for several years, will they be unconcerned when you get out of minority, and have but a few moments between you and the full inheritance?

(4.) This deserves to be your comfort under any doubts about a resurrection, or a future happiness. He who is *the resurrection and the life*, and is called so, among other reasons, because it shall be brought about by the power of his voice, and the authority of his command,—He has Angels to behold him, looking at his face to take his

SERM. 25. orders, as well as to admire his glory. Make no objections about the manner how the graves are to be opened, and the dust awakened into a second life; how souls who have lived loose and free in heaven shall come down again into their old habitations. These are mysteries, and would be no better than dreams, if we had not the word of a *God that cannot lie.*

But the difficulties that appear in such things are gone, if you do but consider that Angels are the officers and Christ the guide of the whole concern. What is there which they cannot execute, when He thinks fit to command it? He is *revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels.* And from hence you may also conclude the happiness both of soul and body. He is now *seen of Angels*, and he shall be seen of you. You are his own, *the ransomed of the Lord*, which they never were. Though he has done more for them in their creation, yet his love and pity has exceeded towards you in redemption; and therefore it is no wonder if with his original servants he also bring in his *purchase* and his *chosen*; for they, as well as the Angels, *shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

2 Thess. i. 9.

Rev. xxii. 4.

April 26. 1719.

SERMON XXVI.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

—Preached unto the Gentiles.

IN these words we enter upon the *fourth branch* of this Great Mystery, that promotes our Godliness, and secures our salvation. We have heard of Christ,

Chriſt, *firſt*, That he was *manifeſted; ſecondly*, That he was *juſtified; thirdly*, That he was *ſeen;* and now, *fourthly*, That he is *preached of.* Theſe are ſo many ways of ſpreading out his Name, and ſerving the mighty purpoſe of redemption that he came about. His *manifeſtation* was to all thoſe in Judea, who ſaw him, and heard him: he *ever ſpake openly in the temple and ſynagogues, whither the Jews did always reſort:* he was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld him. His *juſtification* is more inward, and refers us to a ſecret witneſs, the teſtimony that is delivered and impreſſed upon the ſouls of his people; for Chriſt is *in us as our hope of glory.* He was manifeſt *in the fleſh*, by appearing in the reality of our nature; but he is juſtified *in the Spirit*, which reaches no farther than a principle of religion does: he is *glorified in his Saints, and admired in them that believe.* SERM. 26. John xviii. 20. Col. i. 27.

But, beſides theſe two, He is *ſeen* and *preached of.* Seen no longer by us: for though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, *henceforth we know him no more.* The heavens have received him till the time of the reſtitution of all things. He is one *whom having not ſeen we love, and in whom, though now we ſee him not, yet believing we rejoice. He dwells in the light which none can approach to, whom no man has ſeen, nor can ſee.* But yet he is ſeen in the glory of his Perſon, the fulneſs of his reward, and the vaſt compaſs of his deſign. In all theſe he is *ſeen of Angels*, the things relating to Him are what *they deſire to look into.* They are miniſtring Spirits about his throne, beholding his face in righteouſneſs, and ſatisfied with his likeneſs. We at preſent are that part of the family that cannot ſee him: *We walk by faith, and not by ſight.* He has left our world, and keeps in his hands *the keys of the inviſible ſtate;* and therefore in this abſence of his Perſon, and the impoſſibility of having 1 Pet. i. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 16. 1 Pet. i. 12. 2 Cor. v. 7 Rev. i. 18

SERM. 26 ving a full vision, he has taken another way to begin, and keep up his acquaintance with us: *He is preached among the Gentiles.*

The success of this we have in the next branch of our religion, that *he is believed on in the world.* The one is the counterpart to the other. *Preaching* is telling mankind what he is, *believing* is taking in the report, which goes a great deal farther than merely giving our assent to the truth of it; for it moulds and forms the soul to what we hear. Whilst we look at his glory, we are *changed into the same image.* Believing is feeling as well as hearing. And this is so much the great business of religion, that you find the holy Spirit has given us two branches of the mystery upon one head of honour that is done to Christ in the world. We have the means of bringing it about, and that is *preaching* him to the Gentiles, and then the happy event of these methods, that he is *believed on* among those that fear him.

2 Cor. iii. 18.

I am now calling your thoughts to the former of these; which, as I said before, contains the fourth branch of the Christian religion: He was *preached among the Gentiles.* I must observe to you, as I have done all along, that the report is made in the form of a history concerning the same Person who had been mentioned before; so that the method, into which I shall cast my design from this part of the verse, will not be very different from that I have taken in the whole subject.

1. To give you some account of what is here affirmed, that he was preached unto the Gentiles.

2. To shew you, that this belongs to him as a GOD; He of whom these things are said, can be no other than the Supreme Being.

3. That there is something in it mysterious and wonderful, exceeding the comprehension of human reason.

4. That

4. That the design of this doctrine, and the virtue that attends it, is to promote *godliness* in all manner of conversation: it is an opinion that brings forth fruit to account. SERM. 26.

I. I am to explain the thing itself that is here said of Christ Jesus, that the *God* who was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, and seen of Angels, is now *preached unto the Gentiles*. There are two particulars under this head.

1. That Christ is *preached;* and,

2. That this is done *among the Gentiles*.

1. What is the import of the expression, that he was *preached?* The word signifies the office of a herald, or, as some think, of an ambassador; and it comprehends no less than this, that He employs people to make him known, and to give a publication to the glorious design that he came upon. *Thus it is written*, saith he to his disciples, *and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations: and ye are witnesses of these things.* To the same purpose they say, *We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost. He shewed himself unto witnesses, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead, and commanded them to preach unto the people, and to testify, it is He who is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* The name of Preachers that he has given to these his servants, leads us into the nature of their duty, and the tendency it has to bring on the happiness of the world. Their preaching takes into it these following particulars: declaring him to be the only Mediator between God and man; representing his sufficiency to answer all the danger of our souls; doing this in the plainest and most open way; shewing his willingness to save those that are lost; persuading people to come unto him; asserting his right over the whole creation, and especially

Luke xxiv. 46, 47, 48.

Acts v. 32. — x 41, 42.

SERM. 16. ſpecially the Church; and doing all this with an eye to that ſtate where *his* glory ſhall be ſeen, and *ours* be complete.

Acts xx. 24. This is preaching; it is thus we *fulfil the miniſtry that we have received, and teſtify the Goſpel of the grace of God.* He that puts the brethren in

1 Tim. iv. 6. mind of theſe things, is *a good miniſter, nouriſhed up in the words of ſound doctrine.* Satan would direct our thoughts and zeal to ſomething elſe; but

ver. 15, 16. the Apoſtle ſaith to Timothy, *Meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to them,* ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, be in them, live there, *that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyſelf, and to thy doctrine; continue in them,* ἐπίμενε ἐν αὐτοῖς, in thoſe fundamental truths which make up that doctrine; *for in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.*

(1.) To preach Chriſt, is to declare that he is the only Mediator between God and man; and when this is preached among the Gentiles, it is to turn them from the error of their way, and the vile abominations they were got into. They had a multitude of deities, and as great a number of

1 Cor. viii. 5. interceſſors: *There be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many;* but Chriſtianity was to ſtrike them off from all this dangerous impertinence in the greateſt concern of their lives, and to tell them, that *to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.* Theſe are the main principles of our religion, that there is

1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, 7. *but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time; whereof,* ſaith he, *I am ordained a Preacher, and an Apoſtle, a Teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

This is that doctrine which he ſent his ſervants

Acts iv. 12. round about the world with, That *there is ſalvation*

in no other, nor any other name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved. It is what he preſſed upon the Jews in his own miniſtry: *All that came before me are thieves and robbers, but the ſheep did not hear them:* and again, *If ye believe not that I am He, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* John the Baptiſt had before this been like *the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths ſtraight: One comes after me, who is before me. He whom God has ſent, ſpeaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by meaſure to him: what he has ſeen and heard, that he teſtifies, and no man receives his teſtimony: he that has received his teſtimony, has ſet to his ſeal that God is true.*

SERM. 26.
John x. 8.
— iii. 32, 33.

It is a going off from the ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion, and indeed the whole deſign upon which we have it, for us to talk of any other Mediator beſides Him, who was in all points tempted as we are. He keeps the work entirely in his own hands, and will have it ſaid of none but himſelf, that *he is the way, the truth and the life, and that none comes to the Father but by him.* And therefore, it is part of our miniſtry to ſhew, that *this is He of whom Moſes in the law, and the Prophets did write.* He that in the fulneſs of time was made of a woman, is that *ſeed of the woman* who ſhould break the ſerpent's head, *Who was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you.* It was of him whom we now preach, that God ſpake to the Patriarchs; for *the Scripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the Goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* It is he of whom David ſpeaks; for *he being a Prophet knew that God would of his loins raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his throne.* He is the root that ſhould come forth out of the ſtem of Jeſſe, and the branch that ſhould grow

— xiv. 6.
1 Pet. i. 20.
Gal. iii. 8.
Acts ii. 30.

SERM. 26. grow out of his roots, *the bright and morning ſtar, the root and offspring of David.* In a word, it is he who was promiſed of God to the fathers; he that ſhould come, neither look we for another. And
Rom. i. 3, 4. from this we are never to depart, being *ſervants to God in the Goſpel of his Son, who was made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh, and declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holineſs in the reſurrection from the dead.*

(2.) When we preach Chriſt, we repreſent him as ſufficient to anſwer all the danger that our ſouls are in. The poor heathen had a wild way of explaining the fall of man, and the redemption that God is carrying on, and yet they had ſome confuſed apprehenſions about it. They ſaw that he who made them was angry with them; they felt a depravity in their manners; they ſtrove to procure the Divine favour by ſacrifice and offering; and the more devout any people were, the greater expence did they run into; ſo that the doctrine of original ſin, and a ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God, ſeems to have made ſome general impreſſions upon our whole nature. They knew ſo much, that we had undone ourſelves, and that it was not in our own power to become happy again.

Now, we muſt tell the heathen, and all mankind, that every contrivance to ſet ourſelves aright with God, fell ſhort of the deſign. We have no-
Mic. vi. 6, 7. thing wherewith to *come before the Lord, and bow ourſelves to the Moſt High God; thouſands of rams, and ten thouſand rivers of oil* was a great deal for us to give, but too little for him to take. Giving *the firſt-born for our tranſgreſſion, the fruit of the body for the ſin of the ſoul,* was the higheſt act of ſelf-denial; but it could be no better than atoning for one ſin by another, for a leſs by a greater. Chriſtianity is to tell the world, that all this will not do, that ſuch a profuſion of treaſure and blood may be ſpared for two reaſons. *Firſt,* Becauſe they

they are not sufficient to answer the ends; and, *secondly*, Because there is something else to prevent them. Christ has, by one offering, for ever perfected them that are sanctified. The devotions under the law were to be repeated yearly, monthly, and daily; but as they had no more than a typical virtue, so the substance they refer to being come, there is an end of them: *Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things; from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.* SERM. 26. Acts xiii. 38, 39.

We are to tell mankind, that here is One *able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them:* that there needs no more sacrifice by way of atonement. He appeared *once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the offering of himself.* He is a High-Priest of good things to come; and not by the blood of bulls and goats, which being imperfect, must be renewed, but *by his own blood he entered into the holiest of all, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* Heb. vii. 25. —— ix. 26.

And as he has carried along with him a merit that will be the foundation of perpetual claims, so he has the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily. He wants for no grace to make you a *willing* people, no more than for a righteousness to make you a *pardoned* people: *You are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power.* He can begin his work upon the most unlikely persons, he can carry it on through the greatest dangers; for *we are preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.* This is the good news that we bring to a desolate world which lies in wickedness, ὑπὸ τῦ πο- νηρῦ, under the power of the wicked one,—to tell them that they may be saved, that God has laid help on Him that is mighty; *an interpreter, one among a thousand.* He is gracious to them, having found out a ransom, and so they are delivered from Col. ii. 10. Jude 1. 1 John v. 19.

SERM. 26. going down to the pit. We tell the Jews, that
Rom. viii. 4. *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, is now brought about in a better and an easier way. *God has sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by making him a sacrifice for sin, has condemned it in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in them that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

(3.) Preaching Christ is telling these things in the plainest and most open way we can. The ministry of John the Baptist is called φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, the voice of one crying or shouting in the wilderness. It is the publication that he gives to the world, as it was foretold in the very prophecy
Isa. xl. 6. 9. that refers to John; *The voice said, Cry: O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain*, from whence they may spread out the report; *O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah*, BEHOLD YOUR GOD.

The doctrine we are charged with in particular, is the Deity of our Saviour. All the descriptions that we have of the ministerial work, represent it as contrived on purpose to tell the news abroad:
—— lii. 7, 8, 10. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord brings again Zion. The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our* GOD. Therefore for us to be either afraid or unwilling to testify of Him whom we are sent out to proclaim, is not making full proof of our ministry; it is actually undoing what we are set
2 Cor. ix. 16. apart for. For *a necessity is laid upon us; yea, woe unto us, if we preach not the Gospel!* We have in Christ

Chriſt Jeſus the great example, as well as the glorious object of our miniſtry: *I have preached righteouſneſs*, ſaith he, *in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knoweſt: I have not hid thy righteouſneſs within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulneſs and thy ſalvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindneſs, and thy truth, from the great congregation.* SERM 26. Pſ. xl. 9, 10.

Miniſters are *ſet for the defence of the Goſpel* as well as morality. As they muſt blow the trumpet to warn ſinners, and bid them turn from the evil of their ways, leſt that blood be required at their hands; ſo when the time comes that people will *not endure ſound doctrine, they are to watch in all things, to endure afflictions, to do the work of Evangeliſts, and make full proof of their miniſtry.* There is ſuch a thing as betraying the faith that was once delivered to the ſaints; and if this is the crime of thoſe who are charged to *hold faſt the faithful word*, what can they expect when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear? 2 Tim. iv. 3. 5.

It is an argument, and a very powerful one to fleſh and blood, that the doctrines of the Goſpel being run down as nonſenſe, cannot be maintained without danger; but a miniſter, who has any *uſe* of that faith that he talks of, who makes that world the place of his converſation, which is the ſubject of his report, will have an anſwer to every objection that riſes from below: *Bonds and afflictions*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *do in every city abide me, but none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear to myſelf, ſo that I may finiſh my courſe with joy, and fulfil the miniſtry that I have received, and teſtify the Goſpel of the grace of God.* He charges the Coloſſians to ſay to Archippus, *Take heed to the miniſtry which thou haſt received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it;* and is that by being ſilent in the cauſe, and unconcerned what becomes of the truth as it is in Jeſus? No, it is our buſineſs to Acts xx. 23. 24. Col. iv. 17.

make

SERM. 26 *make all men see what is the fellowship of the my-*
Eph. iii. 9. *stery that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God*

We are so far from being ashamed to t of mysteries, though we are laughed at for it, that we must tell them our ministry consists of these, and we endeavour to make them see them, and what fellowship there is in them; that there is something communicated *by* such doctrines, and derived *from* them. Though they are above the comprehension of reason, yet they are prepared to nourish and feed the soul. Whether people will hear, or whether they will forbear, we must let them know, that Christianity is a great deal more than the best instructions for duty, and lessons for practice. There is an unintelligible part in it, what the Apostle here calls a *mystery*, that from the beginning was hid with Christ in God.

It is no argument for us to be silent upon these heads, because the world will not *endure sound doctrine*. When a truth is run down, it is a time for you to *hold fast the profession of your faith without*
1 John iv. 1. *wavering*. You must not *believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world*. The Apostle Paul had as much prudence as any man, and yet you find how he conducts himself in his ministry. When he is called to preach before Felix, the pride and injustice of that person direct him to speak of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. When he came to Athens, he struck at their darling practice; for in all things
Acts xvii. 22. 23, 24. they were *too superstitious*, and tells them, *The God whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you, for we ought not to think the Godhead is like to silver and gold: he dwells not in temples made with hands*. And even among them he preaches *Christ Jesus, and the resurrection from the dead*, though they had called him a *babbler, and a setter forth of*

strange

ſtrange gods. And when he comes upon this ſubject again, as he ſpeaks of *the reſurrection, ſome mocked, and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this matter.* When he preached to the Jews, he knew no doctrine would be ſo grating to them as *Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* This was their *ſtone of ſtumbling*, the thing they could not get over, and yet thus he employed his miniſtry among them. When he went to Theſſalonica, as his manner was, he goes into the ſynagogue, *opening and alleging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and that this Jeſus whom I preach unto you is Chriſt.* Thus he did to the Jews at Rome; though they *contradicted and blaſphemed the things that he ſpake*, yet he held on. No reputation of his own was of any value with him; he threw *all that* into the future glory. SERM. 26. Acts xvii. 3.

It is a poor reaſon for miniſters to conceal their faith, becauſe others will not hear it. We read of quite another conduct: *Certain falſe brethren were unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out the liberty that we have in Chriſt Jeſus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by ſubjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with you.* You ſee it was this that he had moſt at heart; and there is no fulfilling of our miniſtry, without a faithfulneſs to it. He could not have bid the elders of Epheſus farewell with that confidence, if he had not borne his teſtimony againſt all oppoſition: for, *after the manner of men, he fought with beaſts at Epheſus.* But he could ſay at parting, *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* Why! *for I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.* He did not ſhun to declare any part of it. The counſel of God certainly takes in the myſteries of religion, and in particular the glory of Chriſt, whoſe names are *Wonderful, Counſellor.* Had he ſhunned to declare this, Gal. ii. 4, 5. Acts xx. 26, 27.

SERM. 36. this, he had been guilty, polluted with the blood of men. But upon the opening of his miniſtry about *theſe things*, he calls them to record, that he was pure: that whatever blot he went away with, there could be none upon the account of any unfaithfulneſs in his work. He might have a great deal of the *reproach* of men, but none of their *blood* ſtuck to him; *that* fell all upon their own heads: 'There is nothing that I can have more 'dread of in my miniſtry, than that I ſhould have 'ſaid too little of Chriſt, and not have been zeal-'ous enough for the glory of his name.' Happy are they who are witneſſes for him, and neither aſhamed of his perſon nor his words before an adulterous and ſinful generation. They ſhall find that he will be a *faithful and true witneſs* to them.

Mat. xxiv. 45, 46, 47. *Who is that faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord has made ruler over his houſehold, to give them their meat in due ſeaſon? Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his Lord when he comes ſhall find ſo doing: verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make him ruler over all his goods.*

(4.) We preach Chriſt as one who is willing to ſeek and ſave that which is loſt. We cannot leave out his goodneſs when we talk of a Redeemer:

Rom. v. 8. *Herein he has commended his love towards us, in that when we were yet ſinners, he died for us.* We are indeed to inſiſt upon the terrors of the Lord, that, *as many as are under the law, are under the curſe:* that a ſatisfaction muſt be made to the juſtice of God; for, *without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion.* But theſe things are ſo far from contradicting what is ſaid of the love of Chriſt, that they rather exalt it. We cannot have a greater evidence of the regard he has to our nature, than when he was pleaſed to live in it, and to die with it. That he came down a little lower than the Angels, not (as Adam was made) to live in all the fulneſs of paradiſe; but *for the ſuffering of death*, that

that through that *he might deſtroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death are all their lifetime ſubject to bondage.* What an example was here of a good will towards men! SERM. 25.

(5.) Our preaching of Chriſt ſignifies the pains we are at in perſuading people to come to him. We *are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconciled unto God.* We muſt follow you with the doctrines of godlineſs, that God was manifeſt in the fleſh: and what is the expoſtulation that ariſes out of it but this? *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* We tell you there is hope in *Iſrael* concerning this thing. You may *flee for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope ſet before you:* and will you not come to him *that ye may have life?* 2 Cor. v. 20. Heb. vi. 18.

Indeed we are clothed with a great authority, or rather are the heralds of *his.* He has told us what to ſay in a way of demand, and in a way of threatning. We tell you that He whom you ſerve is *over all, God bleſſed for ever:* that he will be a ſwift witneſs againſt his enemies, that whoever believes not is condemned already, and *the wrath of God abides on him.* But though theſe are terrors of the Lord, we know and uſe them to *perſuade men.* We call them to flee from a wrath to come; and in doing this, we muſt be ſuppoſed to tell them, that a way is found out, *a new and living one;* new in oppoſition to that which the great God had once eſtabliſhed, and which our firſt parents had broken, and therefore is now ſtopt up; and then it is a living way, as no death can come there, as life flows and ſtreams out from it, as it has a vital influence upon thoſe that enter into it, and as it leads into the life of another world. Thus our preaching is not only a diſplay of doctrine to your underſtanding, but of argument to your affections, that you may receive both the knowledge and *the love of the* Joh. iii. 36. Heb. x. 20.

SERM. 26. *truth*, and so may be saved. This is preaching of Christ Jesus.

(6.) We assert his authority over the whole creation, and especially over the churches: that *he has the government upon his shoulder*, that *all power is given to him in heaven and in earth.* This is an article that we must by no means part with. He will never give his glory to another, and it is a breach of trust for us to do it: *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* His empire over the world is not so clearly seen as it will be; but that over the churches we must make as visible as we can, by owning no other authority. He speaks to his disciples of *things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, in so ample a way, that the dispensation we are under is complete: *You need not that any man teach you, but the same anointing teaches you all things; and this is truth, and no lie.* This is the cause of God, to which his servants have borne a testimony; and *they have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.* I will only add one note here; that surely asserting the Divinity of Christ, ought not to be called a denying his authority. It is strange that those people who do not believe his Godhead, should set up for the best friends to his empire. My saying that he is equal with the Father, can never be inconsistent with a belief that he is Head over all things to the Church.

Isa. ix. 6. Mat. xxviii 18.

2 Cor. iv. 5.

Acts i. 3.

1 Joh. ii. 27.

Rev. xii. 11.

(7.) In this preaching of Christ, we have an eye to that state, where *his* glory shall be seen, and *ours* complete: *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.* For this end we make him known, that you may *press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling.* We tell you that which the natural man despises, and which the very people of God cannot think of without an awful confusion. We know but in part, and therefore

Col. i. 28.

Phil. iii. 14.

fore can but *prophecy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away.* When we have our reſemblance of his Perſon, we ſhall be fitted to all the joys of meditation, being made *like him by ſeeing him as he is.* The rejoicing that we hope for, is, *in the day of Chriſt Jeſus, that we have not run in vain, nor preached in vain.*

SERM. 25.
1 Cor. xiii. 10.
1 Joh. iii. 2.
Phil. ii. 16.

SERMON XXVII.

May 10. 1719.

2. THE other part of the truth contained in this text, is, that he was *preached unto the* GENTILES; by whom we are to underſtand all the reſt of the world, who had been by the providence of God a long while diſtinguiſhed from one particular people; for when he gave the word to Jacob, and his ſtatutes to Iſrael, *he dealt not ſo with any other nation.* Moſes appeals to them as poſſeſſing the grand peculiar of all hiſtory, having that in their experience which was never known any where elſe. *Aſk now of the days that are paſt, which were before thee ſince the day that God created man upon the earth, and aſk from one ſide of the heaven to the other, whether there has been any ſuch thing as this great thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God ſpeaking out of the midſt of fire, as thou haſt heard, and live? Or hath God aſſayed to go and take him a nation from the midſt of another nation, by temptations, and by ſigns, and by wonders, by wars, by a mighty hand, and an out-*

Pſal. cxlvii. 20.
Deut. iv. 32.—35.

SERM. 27 *ſtretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was ſhewed.* He turns very often upon this great privilege in that long diſcourſe. *Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God has choſen thee to be a ſpecial people to himſelf, above all people that are on the face of the earth.*

Deut vii. 6.

This argument God himſelf uſes by way of reproach to them who had ſo many diſtinctions in their lot, and ſo few in their carriage. *Hear this word that the Lord has ſpoken againſt you, O ye children of Iſrael, againſt the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt; you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore you will I puniſh for your iniquities.* Nor does the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles deny this, though his miniſtry was directed at the levelling all thoſe peculiarities, and ſhewing the world that now they were at an end. Yet when he puts the queſtion, *What profit has the Jew, and what advantage is there in circumciſion?* He anſwers, *Much every way, chiefly becauſe to them were committed the oracles of God.* And in the time that his ſoul was in all that agony about them, that he *had great heavineſs, and continual ſorrow in his heart, that he could wiſh himſelf accurſed from Chriſt, for his brethren, his kinſmen, according to the fleſh;* yet he owns, that to *them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes.*

Amos iii. 1, 2.

Rom. iii. 1, 2.

——ix. 2, 3, 4.

Theirs alone was the *adoption:* no other people were accounted children, but rather ſpoken of as *dogs*, according to the phraſe that our Lord uſed, when the woman of Canaan came to him.—Theirs was the *glory* that filled the tabernacle and the temple, and appeared in the holieſt of all. Theſe were things not ſo much as talked of in any other place beſides Judah, where God was well known, and

Pſal. lxxvi. 1, 2.

and his name was great in Iſrael, in Salem was his tabernacle, and Sion was his ſeat.—Theirs were the *covenants:* God never profeſſed a relation to any people but them, having taken Jacob to himſelf, and Iſrael for his peculiar treaſure. They were a people near unto the Lord, and concerning whom, he proclaimed what he did no where elſe, That he would be to them a God, and they ſhould be to him a people.—To them pertained *the giving of the law:* Never were ſtatutes delivered with a purity unallayed, and with a thunder undiſguiſed, but among them. Other nations were left to *walk after their own ways*, but to them God himſelf came down, Angels attending him, clouds and darkneſs covering the place, voices and flames diffuſing the authority. *He came with ten thouſand of his ſaints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.*—Theirs were the *promiſes: the covenants of promiſe* were of the ſame extent with the *commonwealth of Iſrael.* For though God did not leave himſelf without witneſs to others, in giving them rain and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs; yet to *theſe* he opened out the great deſign of redeeming the world. This is called *the hope of Iſrael;* for though it came with a benefit to all mankind, yet the Jews alone could be ſaid to hope for it, and none but *the twelve tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and night* had any ground to expect it.—And the reaſon is plain from what the Apoſtle advances further, *Theirs were the fathers*, men who in ſeveral ages waited for the conſolation of Iſrael. The Prophets, in whom the *Spirit of Chriſt* did teſtify, were of their country. All the light that was given to the world concerning a Mediator came from them. And out of them *Chriſt himſelf* aroſe *according to the fleſh.* When he took upon him our nature, he appeared in their country. He was of the ſeed of Abraham, and the family of David, and came in perſon to none but *his own.* There he

SERM. 27.

Deut. xxxiii. 2.

Eph. ii. 12.

SERM. 27. Mal. iii. 1. he had his houſe, *The Lord came ſuddenly to his temple*. He was the meſſenger of the covenant that God had made with them, and they alone profeſſed any *delight* in him. He was raiſed up as *a horn of ſalvation in the houſe of his ſervant David*. And though he came as a light to lighten the Gentiles, yet he was in a particular manner *the glory of his people Iſrael*.

So that you ſee the world was for a long time thus unequally divided into Jews and Gentiles. By the former, no more was meant than a ſingle nation, confined within narrow bounds. Theſe were the favourites of heaven, and the greateſt part of our nature was all the reſt of the world. Now when Chriſt was manifeſt in the fleſh, and juſtified in the Spirit, and ſeen of Angels, (they ſaw him up to his throne), he determined to widen his empire. He ſat down on God's right-hand, that from Pſal. cx. 1, 2, 3. 6. thence he might *ſend the rod of his ſtrength out of Zion*, and have a *willing people in the day of his power:* He was to *judge among the heathen, and wound the heads over many countries*. He therefore orders thoſe whom he had put into the miniſtry, to preach him among the Gentiles, where he was never heard of, not ſo much as expected, or at leaſt not with thoſe grounds of hope and clearneſs of evidence under which he had been revealed to the Jews.

This is one branch of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, that they who knew him not before, ſhould have the joyful ſound ringing in their ears. I am not yet got ſo far into my ſubject, to conſider this under the notion that the text gives us of it, as a wonder and a *myſtery*. I will therefore only purſue this one obſervation in two parts: *firſt*, That till the Goſpel came to be preached, God was all along narrowing the intereſt of religion, bringing it into ſtraiter bounds: but, *ſecondly*, From the time of our Lord's aſcenſion, he took quite other methods, en-

larging both his intereſt and the ways of promoting it. SERM. 27.

1ſt, You will ſee by going over ſome hiſtorical accounts, that until the Goſpel came to be preached in this laſt and beſt edition, religion confined and drew in itſelf by every new diſpenſation. As for example,

(1.) When God had revealed that promiſe, which was the blooming Goſpel, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould break the ſerpent's head*, as it was delivered to our firſt parents, ſo it equally concerned all their poſterity. But we are ſoon told, in proceſs of time, that though Cain had ſome notions of natural religion, yet he was a ſtranger to the myſtery and benefit of what had been revealed. For *by faith Abel offered a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts.* After his murder, Seth was born as *another ſeed, inſtead of Abel, whom Cain ſlew;* and when he had a ſon, who was named Enos, *then began men to call on the name of the Lord.* Gen. iii. 15. Heb. xi. 4. Gen. iv. ult.

There were then two ſocieties. They that ſerved God in a right manner, lived ſeparate from the reſt. Cain's poſterity, though they are remembered for the invention of ſeveral arts, yet ſucceeded to the lot of their father,—from the Divine preſence they were hid. When this diſtinction wore out, that *the ſons of God* (Seth's race) *went in to the daughters of men*, it firſt confounded religion, making all wickedneſs run looſe, and then it brought a flood *upon the world of the ungodly.* As they were alike in practice, God makes them alike in vengeance. *All fleſh had corrupted its way upon the earth, and God ſaid unto Noah, The end of all fleſh is come before me.* ——vi. 2. ——11, 13.

(2.) After the flood, when our whole nature conſiſted of no more than what came out of the ark, Noah had three ſons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and

SERM. 27. and it is only the firſt of theſe among whom the true worſhip was maintained. For though God would *perſuade Japhet, and* make him *dwell in the tents of Shem*, yet many ages rolled off before that deſign took place. And as for Ham, he and his poſterity were under a curſe, and doomed to be *ſervants of ſervants to their brethren;* ſo that here ſeemed to be another ſtraitning in religion. In Adam's family God had one in two, in Noah's he had no more than one in three; and thus it held for a great many generations, till the fulneſs of time came to *bring his ſons from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth.*

(3.) Even Shem's family grew degenerate and polluted; for though they did not run into the wickedneſs of the Canaanites, which made Abraham ſend among them for a wife to his ſon, yet they were guilty of idolatry, as you may learn Joſh. xxiv. 2. from what Joſhua tells the Jews, *Your fathers dwelt on the other ſide of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, and ſerved other gods.* And afterwards when he puts them to their choice, he mentions *the gods which their fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the flood.*

Here then religion lodges itſelf in a ſingle fa- Acts vii. 2. mily: as the martyr Stephen obſerves, *The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran.* He is ſeparated from all the reſt of the earth. We read in his firſt remove, that his father Terah, and his nephew Lot came with him, under ſome convictions of their former error. Nachor they leave behind them, from whence the family was ſupplied with wives in two generations after. Terah dies in Haran; Abraham therefore and Lot were left alone in Acts vii. 4. the poſſeſſion of the true religion. *When his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein you now dwell.* Lot, upon a quarrel, ſeparates from

from Abraham, and goes to Sodom; and though he was *a righteous man*, yet we read of no good among his poſterity. But the promiſe is given to *Abraham after Lot was parted from him;* and all the land he ſaw eaſtward and weſtward and northward and ſouthward was enſured to him and his ſeed, as diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of his relations. The children of Lot are numbered among the heathen: *The Ammonite and Moabite were not to enter into the congregation of the Lord, till their tenth generation;* ſo that there was ground enough for that advice, *Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and the hole out of which ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you, for I called him* ALONE, *and bleſſed him, and increaſed him.* SERM. 27. Deut. xxiii. 3. Iſa. li. 1, 2.

(4.) Here is ſtill a farther narrowing of the divine intereſt; for though Abraham's whole family were taken into an external covenant during his own days, yet one half of them are cut off afterwards. Iſhmael was a child of many prayers, *O that he may live in thy ſight*, and was bleſſed, *becauſe he was Abraham's ſeed*, yet the covenant is made only with Iſaac; and therefore we find his poſterity numbered among the crowd of enemies againſt whom the Church of God were defending themſelves by prayer: *Gebal and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philiſtines, with them of Tyre; the tabernacles of Edom and the Iſhmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarenes: Aſſur alſo is joined with them, and they have helped the children of Lot.* Many of theſe people deſcended from thoſe parents, who once profeſſed the true religion. But this partition in Abraham's family was ſo remarkable, that the Apoſtle makes it an alluſion to the greateſt diſtinction that is in the world, *viz.* between hypocrites and true believers. *Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bond-woman, and the other by a free-woman;* Pſ. lxxxiii. 7, 8. Gal. iv. 22, 23, 24.

he

SERM. 27. *he that was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh, but he of the free-woman was by promise: which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants, one from mount Sinai, which genders to bondage; and we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise.*

(5.) Here is a farther limitation; for though Isaac had the promise renewed to him, *That in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed*, yet that is only to be understood of one half. He
Rom. ix. 11, 12. had two sons, Esau and Jacob, and *whilst the children were not yet born, neither had done either good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls, it was said, The elder shall serve the younger.* Though both of them had a religious education, yet the benefits of it are very much confined to one of the branches. Indeed it is probable, that some of Esau's posterity kept up the worship of the true God, and that Job and his friends might be of that descent. But this wore out after a few generations, and there was room enough for God to say, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.* They run down into gross idolatry; they were called
Mal. i. 4. *the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord had indignation for ever.*

(6.) Jacob's whole family indeed remain possessed of the true religion, and all the twelve tribes are brought out of Egypt; but in Jeroboam's time ten of them fall off both from their King and their God: They wander into all the abominations of the heathen, so that there are but two tribes in which the Lord God of Israel is owned, according
2 Kin. xvii. 21. to his institutions. *He rent Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king, and Jeroboam drave Israel from following*
Hos. xi. 12. *the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. Ephraim compassed God about with lies, and the house of Israel*

Iſrael with deceit; but Judah was faithful to the Lord, and ruled among the ſaints. Thy calf, O Samaria, has caſt thee off; mine anger is kindled againſt them; how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? SERM. 27. Hoſ. viii. 5.
And this diſtinction held in ſome meaſure even after the captivity: For,

(7.) Whether the ten tribes returned with the two or not, as to me it ſeems probable they did, yet you find in a little time they revive the old prejudice. The Samaritans were ſuppoſed by the Jews not to be of the ſtock of Iſrael, but it is plain they always claimed it. Thus the woman of Samaria talks to our Lord, *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank thereof, he and his cattle?* And ſhe ſpeaks as a ſharer in the great hope of Iſrael, *We know that the Meſſiah comes, and when he is come, he will teach us all things.* But yet, whatever honour they might have from their genealogy, it is plain they were of a different caſt from the Jews in their religion: This appears by the woman's confeſſion, *Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain, and ye ſay Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip.* And the quarrel between them had run ſo high, that *the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.* But the ſmallneſs of the channel is what our Lord himſelf makes evident, when he tells the woman, who talked of their father Jacob, and the expected Meſſiah, *Ye worſhip ye know not what; we know what we worſhip, for ſalvation is of the Jews.* John iv. 12. ver. 25.

(8.) There ſeems to be a yet narrower diſtinction: For the people who lived at ſome diſtance from the temple, though there was no diſpute of their lineal deſcent, are accounted afar off. Thus it is ſaid of the inhabitants in Galilee, where our Lord went about in his miniſtry, that *they ſat in darkneſs, and in the region of the ſhadow of death.* They called it *Galilee of the Gentiles;* perhaps

SERM. 27. not only to signify that it was populous, but to tell us that they were almoſt ſunk down into the diſtreſs of the heathen. This was a country ſo remote from all religious fame, that as no good thing was ever expected out of Nazareth, ſo they bid Nicodemus, *Search and look, for no Prophet ariſes out of Galilee.* So that you ſee, at the time of our Lord's coming into the world, there was little of the true worſhip, except in Jeruſalem, and a very ſmall circuit of land round about it.

John vii. ult.

Thus the promiſe that was firſt given to Adam at large, as deſigned for his whole poſterity, is regarded among his ſons, only by one of the two; among Noah's by one of the three; among Shem's by a ſingle family; among Abraham's Iſhmael is broken off, and Iſaac choſen; of the ſons of Iſaac the firſt-born Eſau is rejected; of Jacob's twelve only two remained in the right profeſſion. And though theſe may be ſuppoſed to ſpread abroad into the country, yet the worſhip of the true God lay in a little compaſs among them. Thus was the empire of Chriſt narrowing itſelf for many ages, as if he had loved, not a diffuſion, but a confinement. Divine Providence ſeemed to take delight in ſtriking off people; and every new diſpenſation, though it made the covenant brighter, yet it made the application of it ſtraiter; and when it lay in the leaſt compaſs, then was *the fulneſs of time that God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law.* But,

Gal. iv. 4.

2. From that period the Divine mercy entered into other meaſures. You may then ſee how religion widened in purſuance of ancient prophecies. (1.) Our Saviour was *a Miniſter of the circumciſion*, and only *ſent to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*, but yet even then he gave a dawn of his being *preached among the Gentiles.* His chief converſation at firſt was in Galilee, and the places beyond Jordan; upon them, as the Prophet foretold,

Rom. xv. 8.

a great light was made to ſhine. Chorazin, and Bethſaida, cities remote from Jeruſalem, had *mighty works done in them;* and Capernaum, which had never been heard of for religion, was *exalted to heaven:* Nay, at Nazareth he *taught in their ſynagogues, being glorified of all.* SERM 27. Luke iv. 15.

Still farther you find, that though he once ordered his ſeventy diſciples *not to enter into any village or city of the Samaritans,* yet it is obſerved of himſelf, that *he muſt needs go through Samaria;* John iv. 4. not merely for the converſion of a poor woman, who publiſhed her faith as ſoon as ever ſhe had it, *Is not this the Chriſt?* but many others in that city believed on him upon a greater ground than her teſtimony, who ſaid, *He has told me all that ever* ver. 42. *I did; they heard him themſelves, and knew that this was indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.* In his converſation he ſhewed no abhorrence of that poor deſpicable people. He let it be known, that mercy had found a way to them. Thus the man, who was robbed and wounded in going down to Jericho, and had been neglected by a prieſt and a Levite, is relieved by a Samaritan; and of the ten lepers that were cleanſed, there was *but one who returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and he was a Samaritan.*

Nay, he went farther, and gave ſome dawn to the converſion of the Gentiles. He ſaith concerning the piety of the Ruler, *I have not found ſo* Mat. viii. *great faith, no not in Iſrael;* and upon that obſerves, 10, 11. that *many ſhall come from the eaſt, and the weſt, and the north, and the ſouth, and ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, when the children of the kingdom are caſt out.* The poor Syrophenician woman that followed him with her importunity, and whom at firſt he would not anſwer, and afterwards ſhe is called no better than a *dog,* has this noble character given of her at laſt,

O

SERM. 27. *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

John xii. 20. But we have ſtill a more copious inſtance: *There were certain Greeks that came to worſhip at the feaſt; theſe come to Philip, and deſire to ſee Jeſus.* ver. 23, 24. Upon that our Lord makes this remark, *The hour is come that the Son of man ſhould be glorified; verily I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.* He farther tells them, that this enquiry of the Greeks was the preſage of an opening glory; not that it would appear very much till after his death; for he compares himſelf and his intereſt to a grain of wheat, which is multiplied by its ſeeming to be loſt. The ground that buries it revives and increaſes it: And thus, though he ſhould for ſome time *abide alone*, yet after his ſufferings it would be ſeen, that dying was only the ſpreading out of an enlarged life.

(2.) Accordingly at his death, he took away all that which had kept up the diſtinction between Jew and Gentile, and ſo laid the foundation for their having the Goſpel. It was impoſſible that ſuch a religion as the Jews had ſhould be ſpread with any great ſucceſs among the Gentiles. Much of it was *local*; they muſt go to appear before the Lord *three times in the year*. There was but one *temple* for all the world, but one high prieſt, and but one place which the Lord had choſen to put his name there. Now, if the duty of people conſiſted in going thither, it muſt be a great toil and expence to the nations afar off, and therefore he Eph. ii. 15, 16. *aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain one new man, ſo making peace; to reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby.* The typical meaning of all their ſervices being anſwered, there is John iv. 21, 23. now an end of them. *Neither at Jeruſalem, nor any*

any other mountain, do we worſhip the Father; for if we do it in *ſpirit and in truth*, it is enough; *the Father ſeeks ſuch to worſhip him. I will that men do every where lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting.* We may perceive *God is no reſpecter of perſons.* SERM. 27. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

(3.) He gave orders to his diſciples ſoon after the reſurrection, that they might be witneſſes for him in Jeruſalem, Judea, Samaria, and *to the uttermoſt ends of the earth. Go*, ſaith he, and *diſciple all nations, preach the Goſpel to every creature.* Indeed he charges them to *begin at Jeruſalem*, that they might have the firſt offer, and his reſurrection appear in full evidence; but after that, *all fleſh was to ſee the ſalvation of our God. He would make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations.* Theſe inſtructions were altogether new; for though God raiſed up Prophets in ſeveral ages, yet he did not uſe to ſend them abroad: But now, by virtue of that power that our Lord had in heaven and in earth, he will be *ſought of them that aſked not after him, and found of them that ſought him not;* and therefore ſpeaks by his Apoſtles, *Behold me, behold me, to a people that were not called by his name.* Thus the Lord created a *new thing in the earth*, that which their fathers had not heard of, they are to be unconfined in their miniſtry. Acts x. 34. Mark xvi. 15. Iſa. lii. 7. 10. — lxv. 1.

(4.) For this he gives them qualifications. They are *endued with power from on high*, the Holy Ghoſt came upon them. That power ſignifies two things, *firſt*, Their authority to go abroad; until then they were not to do it; he bids them *tarry at Jeruſalem* till this commiſſion was ſent down. *Secondly*, It alſo imports their *capacity* to go upon this great expedition. For as the Holy Ghoſt came upon them in the ſhape of *cloven and flaming tongues*, ſo that is an emblem, both that they ſhould be able to ſpeak all languages, and that the word of the Lord in their mouths would ſhine, and

SERM. 27. ſearch, and pierce, like a fire. As he ſent them upon work that never any were employed about before, ſo he furniſhed them for it in a new way. The church of the Jews ſeldom wanted miracles among them, but they had never any thing like this; that a company of Galileans ſhould be attended by vaſt numbers of *devout people* who were *aſſembled from every nation under heaven, and theſe all hear in their different tongues the wonderful works of God.* It is reckoned a mighty thing, that when Moſes was of a ſlow ſpeech, God ſhould *be with his mouth;* but what was that to this unravelling of Babel? At the building of that tower, *God confounded their languages;* at the building of a Goſpel-church, he over-ruled that confuſion, and gave in a miraculous remedy.

Acts ii. 9, 10, 11.

(5.) He did it in accompliſhment of his ancient prophecies. The book of God is full to this purpoſe. Promiſes are made to thoſe people who ſeemed the fartheſt off from mercy. I have ſhewn you with what contempt Iſhmael was caſt out: we read that his ſons were Nebaioth, Kedar, and ſeveral others; his poſterity were ſome of the greateſt enemies to the Church of God. The Iſhmaelites and Hagarenes are in the black roll of ſinners. The Pſalmiſt complains that he ſojourned in the tents of Kedar, and yet there is mercy for them. *All the flocks of Kedar ſhall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth ſhall miniſter to thee; they ſhall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the houſe of my glory.*

Iſa. lx. 7.

The greateſt oppreſſions that ever the Jews felt, were in Egypt and Aſſyria, and yet even theſe were to have the offers of ſalvation: *In that day Iſrael ſhall be a third with Egypt, and with Aſſyria, even a bleſſing in the midſt of the land: Whom the Lord of hoſts ſhall bleſs, ſaying, Bleſſed be Egypt my people, and Aſſyria the work of mine hands, and Iſrael mine inheritance.*

— xix. 24, 25.

If

If there could be any hope for thoſe that lived on the great continent, yet methinks the iſlands were delivered to deſpair and darkneſs. As the ſea ſeemed to have waſhed them off from the reſt of the world, ſo they might ſay, as in another caſe, *The Lord has utterly ſeparated us from his people.* But even theſe are within the promiſe, *Liſten O iſles unto me, and hearken ye people from far.* And when the queſtion is put, *Who are theſe that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?* The anſwer is, *Surely the iſles ſhall wait for me, and the ſhips of Tarſhiſh firſt, to bring my ſons from far to the name of the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Iſrael.* Thus open is the promiſe, *I will gather all nations and tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee my glory; and I will ſet a ſign among them, and will ſend thoſe that eſcape to the iſles afar off, that have not heard of my fame, neither ſeen my glory; and they ſhall declare my glory among the Gentiles.* SERM. 27. Iſa. xlix. 1. — lxvi. 18, 19.

SERMON XXVIII.

May 24. 1719.

YOU have heard that our bleſſed Lord, as a reward to his ſufferings, had his name ſpread farther than ever the Father's had been; for he was *preached among the Gentiles: he has the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion.* And if ye do but conſider that this was a glory which the Supreme Being did not think fit to take for ſeveral generations, Pſ. ii. 8.

SERM. 28. tions, I cannot suppose it will be any astonishment to tell you, that

II. He who thus distinguished himself by an honour that had not been known for many ages, could be no other than the most High God. JEHOVAH is to be *King over all the earth; and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.* It would be strange that a creature should have that for his reward, which the Great God himself has not. That the one should be only known in Israel, and the other (as if those limits were unworthy of him) should be *glorious to the ends of the earth.* That the revelation which the Father made of himself reached no farther than the Jews for a vast length of time, will not be denied: *He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; the times of that ignorance he winked at:* and therefore, who is it of whom we read such things, that *the isles shall wait for him? that his name shall be great from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same?* that *he shall bring forth judgment unto victory, and on his arm shall the Gentiles trust?* Who is it that spreads out a greater glory than ever the God of Israel did? Is this a creature?

Zech xiv. 9.
Acts xiv. 16.
—— xvii. 30.
Mal. i. 11.
Mat. xii. 20, 21.

Sometimes he speaks in his derived character: *The Lord has called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name, saying, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. The Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, said,——that I should be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength, he said,——I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.* The Jewish religion paid a mighty tribute to none but the Supreme God, and shall the Christian give more to a subordinate Deity? no, we adore what they did. *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles?*

Isa xlix. 1. 3. 5, 6.
Rom. iii. 29, 30.

It

It is one God, who ſhall juſtify the circumciſion by faith, and the uncircumciſion through faith. SERM. 28.

I have ſhewn you that his being *ſeen of Angels* in the manner you have heard, was too much for one who is only ſome degrees above them; that their worſhip and adoration was ſo much allegiance to an uncreated nature. And I hope you will now ſee, that his being *preached to the Gentiles* would be an exceſs that no true devotion can allow, if he was not the Moſt High, and *thought it no robbery to be equal with God.* I am ſure it muſt be a *robbery* in thus making himſelf equal with him in honour if he was not equal to him in nature.

In the purſuit of this argument, I ſhall remind you of thoſe heads that I have already enlarged upon. In opening out the deſign and fulneſs of theſe expreſſions, I told you, that for Chriſt to be the ſubject of our miniſtry, was, that we ſhould declare him to be, 1. The only Mediator between God and man. 2. Sufficient to anſwer all the dangers of our ſouls. 3. We are to do this in the moſt open way. 4. That he was entirely willing to ſave thoſe that are loſt. 5. We therefore perſuade ſinners to come to him; and, 6. Are bound to aſſert his right of government over the whole creation, and eſpecially over the Church. You have heard enough to convince you that it is thus Chriſt muſt be preached. In this light he is held forth by the Scriptures of truth; and what we tell the world of Him is upon theſe characters. I will now ſhew you, that all theſe can be true of no other than a GOD, and our miniſtry would be a fraud to mankind; we ſhould be found *falſe witneſſes* both to you and to Him that ſent us, if we ſaid all this of a creature.

This I deſire your attention to, as that which is not only a revealed doctrine, but what enters into all your hope and duty. Many have a mind to paſs it off as a dry ſpeculation, whether Chriſt is

SERM. 28. God or no. 'They do not love *doubtful disputations*; these are things above them; they are hard 'to be conceived; it is carrying them out of their 'depth. Either it is not laid down in the Scriptures, or if it be, it is under so many folds of 'mystery, that God does not expect we should believe what he knows we cannot understand. That 'a man may be saved without it; it is not necessary 'to our holiness now, or the great felicity of another world.' Thus do people *sham* the truth, who have not the confidence to *deny* it. It lets us see, that Satan has advocates of all sizes: that if he cannot bring you to make shipwreck of faith, he will bring you to make a jest of it. But *wilt thou know, O vain man,* that without faith in Christ, as the only Mediator, a sufficient Saviour, a merciful and faithful High Priest, a King over the world, and especially the Church, thou art amongst his enemies? Now, there is no abstracting these from his Divinity; they belong to him as a God. The Scripture makes him the object of our confidence upon these heads, only because *he is the Lord, and there is none else.*

1. We can preach no person to the Gentiles, as the only Mediator between God and man, but one
John i. 2. that is God as well as man: *The same that was in*
1 Joh. v. 20. *the beginning with God: he is the true God, and eternal life.* Do any suppose that because he is called *the man Christ Jesus,* that therefore he was not *God manifest in the flesh?* Are we afraid of meeting him
——iv. 2, 3. in this lower title? no, *He is antichrist, who denies that Christ is come in the flesh.* But consider here, why must he as Mediator be a man? What necessity was there of his coming down into our very nature? The reason is plain, that he might stand upon a level with one of the parties, whose happiness he comprehended in the reconciliation. As
Gal. iii. 20. the Apostle argues, *A mediator is not a mediator of one.* It is supposed that there are two in the quarrel;

rel; therefore in making up the breach, he must be as low as the offender: *Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself took part of the same.* SERM. 28. Heb. ii. 14.

And is not the obligation as great and strong that he should be a God? If there was any necessity of his partaking of one nature, there must be the very same of his sustaining the other. What is the reason that an Angel could not do as well? He is placed between the two natures, neither God nor man: and therefore if a *partnership in both* was not needful, such a creature must have had the most happy situation for this great design. But Angels are both too high and too low: their nature was above the seed of Abraham, and therefore he that came to redeem us, was *made lower than they.* Why? that he might be as low as man; but that would never constitute him a Mediator, unless at the same time he was as high as God. He was *in the form of God*, and thought it no robbery to be *equal with God*, when he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him *the form of a servant.* To say that he represented the Divine Nature is nothing; for an Angel, nay a man, might do that. Moses did it, and therefore it is said with respect to him, that *the law was ordained by Angels in the hand of a mediator.* He might in the same manner have represented both God and man, by keeping his first glory: for if he is ever so much better than the Angels, he is nearer to man than God, supposing him to be no more than a creature. But in taking upon him our interest, he was to be *made of a woman, it behoved him in all things to be like his brethren.* Gal. iii. 19 —iv. 4.

And what? is the concern of *our nature* managed by an equal, and that of the *Divine* only by a deputy? No, the *child born* is the *mighty God*, the *Son given* is the *everlasting Father.* Job gives you the true notion of a Mediator, when he complains that Heb. ii. 16. Isa. ix. 6.

SERM. 28. that all the creation was not able to furnish one.
Job ix. 32. Speaking of God, he saith, *He is not a man as I am,* and therefore, if there is any agreement, it must be by one who is upon a level with each party: *Neither is there any days-man between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.* This days-man, this umpire in the grand debate, is supposed not only to come with designs of peace, but as one who is fitted to the two contenders: he must lay his hand upon us both. Now, as it is easy to imagine what he means by laying his hand upon man, how daring must the presumption be that any creature should in the
Isa. xl. 13, 14. same sense lay his hand upon God? *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and*
ver. 25. *who instructed him? To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the holy One.*

There are two sorts of Mediators: *first*, One that has no interest in *either* party, what we call an indifferent person; *secondly*, One that has an interest in *both*. Our blessed Saviour was not a Mediator of the former sort, but only of the latter. Nay indeed, there could be no Mediator that was unbiassed to both parties. Angels must have joined with God against man, devils would have taken part with man against God; and therefore our Mediator must be so placed between the two adversaries, as to partake of the concerns of both. In order to make him properly a party with us, he must be truly *man;* flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. And does not the very notion of a Mediator tell us, that he could never manage the interest of the Divine Nature, if he was not as truly *God?*

So that his Deity is not an uncertain or a distant speculation; you see it enters into your hope. If he was no man, and if he is no God, we have had no Mediator, the war keeps open; and if there is no reconciliation, there is no pardon: *Our preach-*

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ing is in vain, and your faith in vain; you are yet in your sins. If he was not God, his pretending to secure the divine glory by a satisfaction was exercising himself in things too high for him. He might have a pity for *man*, but no creature, was great enough to take into his hands the interest of *God*, who has expressly told us, that he *puts no trust in his saints.* Not that they ever deceived him; but the meaning is, that there is one affair which he will keep within himself, which none of the spirits about the throne can be equal to. And what can this design be, that none of the saints are let into, as managers or agents, but the redemption of his people? SERM. 28. Job iv. 18.

(2.) In preaching Christ Jesus, we represent him to the world as sufficient to answer all the necessities of their souls, both by way of atonement for them, and of conquest over them; that he paid a full price, and that he is possessed of a complete fund. We do not call them to the vain practice of the heathen religion, to *trust in a god that cannot save:* If there was any more needful to their pardon than he has done, or to their healing than he can do, *in vain would salvation be hoped for* from Him, any more than from the multitude of mountains. But we tell the Gentiles, that he is *one that is mighty, able to save to the uttermost;* that *whoever believes in him shall not be confounded;* that *the ends of the earth may look to him and be saved.* Ps. lxxxix. 19. Heb. vii. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

Now, upon what foundation can we talk so at large, but because *he is the Lord, and there is none else?* He speaks of himself, *I am Jehovah; there is no God besides me; a just God and a Saviour, and there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto* ME *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In the* Isa. xlv. 21.—25.

LORD

SERM. 28. LORD *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength; even to* HIM *ſhall men come, and all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed: in the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory.*

We durſt not ſay of a creature, let him be never
Heb. x. 14. ſo glorious, that *by one offering he has for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.* Obſerve there, what He gives them is a *perfection.* This perfection is *for ever;* it includes their *ſanctification,* and it is by no more than *one offering.* The devils are a great ſacrifice to Divine Juſtice; but though that execution has continued ſo long, they are not ſo much as *ſanctified.* The Jews had an High-prieſt by Divine appointment, who ſanctified the people, but they were never *perfected;* what he did to them muſt be repeated every year: But here is one offering that held for the ſpace of three hours; and this avails to the full pardon of all the ſaints that ever were, or ever will be, either in earth or in heaven.

It is plain the merit does not ariſe from either the extremity or the length of his troubles. Another perſon's body might have been expoſed to the ſame torture, and yet it would not avail as a propitiation for one ſin. So that the value of this death is taken from *his* dignity that endured it: and in that caſe we muſt conſider him as having more than a dying nature. If he was no higher than an Angel, he muſt be too high for a croſs. He died as a man, and what muſt He be more than man, to give that death ſuch an extenſion of merit, as to make an atonement for thoſe vaſt numbers out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?*

Had he been a creature, though never ſo highly exalted, his death might be looked on as heroical; but not as atoning, becauſe it was impoſſible that ſuch a one ſhould lay the Divine Nature under any
Rom. xi. 35. obligation: *For who has firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again?* As for example, an

an Angel may be very dutiful, but he is incapable of having a claim upon God; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe he can do no more than he is obliged to do. And if you will ſuppoſe a creature higher than the Angels, the more glory you imagine to be in Him, the leſs is he capable of deſerving for another; becauſe all his capacities are pre-engaged. SERM. 28.

But now, in order to our Lord's being a ſacrifice, *that* is ſaid of him which could never be true of a creature, that he was *made under the law.* The whole creation are under one law already; nor can they merit any thing from God by laying themſelves under a new one. It is too late to have it ſaid of the Angels; for he made them ſpirits, and his miniſters a flaming fire: and therefore, when this is affirmed of Chriſt, it muſt be underſtood of ſomething *new*, what nothing but his own conſent could bring upon him. And it is of the ſame nature with what he ſays, *A body haſt thou prepared me*, ſuch a cloathing as I had not before: ſo that this could be only true of one who was eternally *above law;* and that is more than can be ſaid of any creature, let him be never ſo glorious. Gal. iv. 4. Heb. x. 5.

I am aware of an anſwer that ſome will give to this, that he was made under the ceremonial law, that *being a miniſter of the circumciſion, it became him to fulfil all righteouſneſs.* This indeed is true enough; but I think it very plain, the law the Apoſtle ſaith he was made under, is not *that*, becauſe he goes on to tell us the reaſon of it, it was *to redeem thoſe that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.* Obſerve here, he ſpeaks this to the Galatians, Gentiles who were never under the ceremonial law of the Jews, and therefore needed no redemption from it. He came under the ſame law with them; and that was the law that the whole creation is under, the covenant of works. Now this, as a creature, he muſt have been

SERM. 28. been under *before*, and therefore his taking upon him that obligation *then* would have been of no avail.

Jer. xxiii. 6. No wonder therefore that he is called *Jehovah our righteouſneſs*; for though the dying by which he brought it in ſhewed him to be a man, yet the very bringing in that righteouſneſs proves that he is the great *Jehovah*. Nor need we be amazed, Zech. xiii. 7. when *God awakes his ſword againſt a man*, that he conſiders that man as *his fellow*. This is more Pſ. lxxxix. 6. than ever he called an Angel; for *who among the gods may be compared unto the Lord?* and yet he ſaith it to a man, and that in a caſe when he was going to ſhew his human nature in the moſt lamentable way. The very awaking of the ſword againſt him was an argument that he had ſomething about him weak, and vain, and paſſive. He could not upon this conſideration be a *fellow* to God; for with regard to *that* he calls himſelf *a worm, and no man*. And is it not ſtrange that in the very worſt of our nature, he ſhould be repreſented as equal to God? But it ſhews us, that though the ſword killed him as a creature, yet the Father had taken his aim in vain, the blow had paſſed for nothing, if it had not fallen upon *his fellow*.

Such a phraſe is that which I have ſome time ago brought in to the ſervice of this argument, Acts xx. 28. *Take heed to the Church of* GOD, *which he has purchaſed with his own blood*. To talk of the blood of a God, of a dying bleeding Deity, is a force upon all language; but the meaning can be only this, that though he who died was plainly a man, yet there muſt be another conſideration of him: He Heb. i. 3. bled as a man, but he purchaſed as a God: *Being the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, by himſelf he purged our ſins.* Rev. i. 5, 6. 8. *He that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and has made us kings and prieſts unto God*

God and his Father: He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, the Almighty. SERM. 28.

The ſame may we obſerve of his other work as a Saviour, and that is making you a willing people; having grace enough to produce your change, to carry on the reformation, and bring you at laſt to heaven. This the ſcripture does ſometimes affirm of the Father. Faith is the operation of God, who raiſed Chriſt from the dead. He is the author of every good and perfect gift, who is *the Father of lights, without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning.* Sometimes the Son claims it as his own performance: *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power, and they ſhall worſhip thee in the beauties of holineſs.* Pſal. cx. 3. And ſometimes we are ſaid to be *born of the Spirit.* Our converſion is *by the power of the Holy Ghoſt;* it is He that quickens.

And though the ſcheme that is ſo much admired has given us a ſubordination of theſe three, yet we find the greateſt work, that our thoughts are able to conceive of, aſcribed to them all. Now, who is it that can *create in you a clean heart, and renew a right ſpirit within you?* —— li. 10. We know that none of the gods of the heathen can give rain, nor can the heavens themſelves, without a Divine appointment, give ſhowers, though they are ſo full of them. Now, muſt he be a God who waters the earth? and may a creature cauſe *his doctrine to drop as the rain, and his ſpeech to diſtil as the dew?*

Have you no other than the Supreme Being for your author? Is it He that has made you, and not you yourſelves? Is He the potter, and you the clay? And can the *other creation*, which is more difficult by the oppoſition that it meets with, and more glorious by the happineſs that it riſes to, may this be done by one who is not God? No, there muſt be the *exceeding greatneſs of his power to work faith in us.* Eph. i. 19. Are you to be *ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, and is he no more than a creature as your-

SERM. 18. selves are? I am obliged to the saints, the excellent of the earth, as *the helpers of my joy*, and more so to the Angels, as the guardians of my soul; but there is something that I want, which neither the one nor the other can give me, and for this I am directed to a Redeemer. Now, his being stronger, and more glorious than they, is not enough, unless he is omnipotent. I can never think he will be
Phil. iii. 21. able to *change my vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body*, if it is not from *a power by which he can subdue* ALL THINGS *to himself.*

(3.) I told you that in preaching Christ Jesus, we are to make a public discovery of him. We must not *conceal his righteousness and his truth from the great congregation;* and in that are to run all hazards: but this is more than we owe to a creature. It is as much, I am sure, as we can possibly do for a God; and it is pity that there are no bounds set to our zeal for him, if he is not so. Worshiping an Angel is reckoned idolatry, and a
Col. ii. 8. gross wickedness, and *let no man beguile you* into it.
Phil. iii. 8. Suppose you had seen any of those who *counted all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord*, and asked them, 'Why do you 'take all this pains for one who is no more than 'a vicegerent? Have you any reserves for the 'principal? Can you possibly go farther for the 'Great God, than you do for this glorious De-
Mic. iv. 3. 5. 'puty?' They might answer, *It is he that shall judge among many people, and strong nations afar off; and therefore as all people will walk every one in the name of his god, so we will walk in the name of this Lord our God for ever and ever.*

This had been a strange way of preaching both to Jews and Gentiles. As to the Jews, if they had not taken the Messiah to be a God, what had they got by the dispensation? What was there in God's speaking to them *by his Son*, more than those divers manners that at sundry times he had taken with

their

their fathers *by the Prophets?* It is true, we read that *Moſes had them that preached him in the ſynagogues every Sabbath-day;* but preaching Moſes was quite a different thing to them from preaching Jeſus. There was no pretence of engaging their truſt and dependence upon Moſes: he was never called their Saviour or their Advocate. And ſo, thoſe expreſſions of their being *baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea,* never did, and never can mean, that they were called by his name, or owned a Divine authority in him. But thus did John the Baptiſt proclaim himſelf to them: *He was the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs.* When he called himſelf ſo, it was to the Jews, who would eaſily turn to that Scripture where this was foretold. There they might read in the plaineſt language: *O Zion, that bringeſt good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jeruſalem that bringeſt good tidings, lift up thy voice with ſtrength; lift it up, be not afraid.* This does by an undeniable connection of the paſſages refer to the coming of Chriſt Jeſus: And what are they to ſay in this public manner? *Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your* GOD. Suppoſing they were to make all this ſolemnity for a creature, what could they poſſibly do more for the Moſt High? Solomon knew that God himſelf *filled the houſe with his glory.* It was no Angel that managed *the cloud,* though ſuch a one might have done it. They adored the diſcovery that God made of himſelf. And what? was a God in a cloud the Supreme God, and a God manifeſt in the fleſh only a ſubordinate? No, He that *gave peace in that place,* and made *the glory of the latter houſe greater than the former, is the Lord of hoſts.*

SERM. 28. Acts xv. 21. 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. Iſa. xl. 9. Hag. ii. 9.

Are miniſters ordered to *lift up their voice with ſtrength,* to ſtand it out againſt all oppoſition, and not to be afraid in proclaiming a mere name, a bare title? The Prophet, in his diſcourſes, takes off

SERM. 28. off all ſurmiſes of that nature, when he deſcribes
Iſa. xl. 10, 11. the God we are to ſpeak of: *Behold, the Lord God ſhall come with a ſtrong hand, and his arm ſhall rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd, he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and ſhall carry them in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.* You will eaſily allow the fitneſs of this character to our bleſſed Lord.
ver. 12. Now, he that does theſe things, has *meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the*
— 28. *heaven with a ſpan,* and is called afterwards *the everlaſting God, the creator of the ends of the earth, who faints not, nor is weary, and there is no ſearching out of his underſtanding.*

As impertinent would it have been to go among the Gentiles with a report concerning a creature; it would have done no more than refine and elevate their idolatry. Their fault was not worſhiping the true God, and doing ſervice to thoſe that *by nature are no gods.* Bowing before the work of their hands was the aggravation and the folly of the crime; but the firſt error lay in paying this homage to any thing; and had they choſen the beſt of the creation for their idol, it was all one in the ſubſtance of the action: the guilt had been the ſame to worſhip an Angel as to worſhip a fly; becauſe it was an alienation of that which could be only due to their Maker.

And muſt Chriſtianity, which is revealed to bring them to their God, rather keep them from him? They were bid to *believe in Chriſt Jeſus, to call on him,* to do in it hopes of ſalvation, to lay the whole weight of their faith and confidence there: and is not this as much as they could do to the true God? Do you imagine, if the Apoſtles knew Jeſus Chriſt to be no more than a creature, that they would in ſo looſe a way have recommended him as the object of all devotion and aſ-

ſurance?

ſurance? and this among people who had *gods* SERM. 28.
many, and lords or mediators *many*, before? Would they not have diſtinguiſhed a thouſand times between the duty they preſſed to a Mediator, and that which was due to the Supreme Being; becauſe this was the very rock upon which the heathen had been ſplit before? Why would they in ſo unguarded a manner ſpeak of him as a God, without telling the people that they only uſed the word in a lower ſenſe? What pity is it they ſhould let the Gentiles run away with an error ſo much akin to that which they were brought up in?

Had ſome preachers of the new ſcheme in our polite age, gone upon the miniſtry, there had been no danger; they would moſt certainly have taken care every time they called Chriſt by the name of God to explain it to them, that he was *not ſelf-originated*, if ſuch a rumbling word may be called an explication. There had been no ſnare in their prayers or ſermons, no aſcribing of glory to *him*, but rather *through him* to another. We ſhould have had a Goſpel well guarded with critical diſtinctions: But it is plain the Apoſtles went on in a more uncautious way, and made ſo little difference between the eſſential glories of the Father and Son, as has tempted thoſe who felt the power of their Goſpel to think there was none. Nay, really, as far as I have looked into the Mahometan religion, I muſt needs own, that it is a ſcheme more open and leſs deceitful than the Chriſtian, if Chriſt is not God. That perſon never called himſelf more than the great Prophet. He takes no titles in common with the Supreme Being; and therefore his followers are in no temptation to believe him a God, becauſe he never called himſelf ſo; but with us there are many paſſages that muſt be a ſnare to our ſouls, if they do not reveal Chriſt to be the great object of our faith.

(4.) In

SERM. 28. (4.) In preaching Chriſt Jeſus, we declare his willingneſs to ſave them that are loſt. It is true, this may be in a creature. Angels have a pity to our nature as it is forlorn, and a delight in it when it is renewed. The ſaints put on, as the elect of God, *bowels of mercy;* but yet the concern that a Mediator has for the ſouls of men, is laid down in thoſe characters that belong chiefly to God.

When Job ſpeaks of the Divine compaſſion, he repreſents it as flowing from a Creator, *Thou ſhalt call, and I will anſwer, for thou wilt have a deſire to the work of thine hands.* He looks upon theſe unhappy people as things or perſons whom he has formed; and in that view the Scripture all along delivers it to us. With the ſame propriety does our Lord ſpeak of his elect. When he was in the world, it is ſaid, *The world was made by him.* He came to redeem a part of his own creation. For
Col. i. 14. 16. though we have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of our ſins*, yet all things are *created by him, and for him.* Thus he ſaith of his people,
John x. 27. when he compares himſelf to a ſhepherd, *They are my ſheep*, and deſcribes a hireling, as one *whoſe own the ſheep are not.* It is true, he mentions the
—— xvii. 10. Father as making the choic, *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me;* but even in that prayer, when he appeared in the form of a ſervant, he ſpeaks of an united and common poſſeſſion, which would have been too much for a creature. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

(5.) Our preaching is perſuading ſinners to come
—— i. 4. to him, that they may have life. *For in him was life, and that life is the light of the world.* But what a baulk is it to our argument, to tell them he is not God? One of the nobleſt notions we can
Pſ. xxxvi. 9. Acts xvii. 28. have of the Deity is, that *with him is the fountain of life: In him we live, and move, and have our being*, was the plaineſt account that the Apoſtle could

could give of the most High God to the Athenians: and would he say that of Him that might be as well affirmed of a creature? Is it not too much for a dependent being to say, *I am the resurrection and the life, and whosoever believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live?* The meaning was not, that he who should die should rise again and live, but the names he here takes upon him signify an almighty influence. SERM. 28. Joh. xi. 25.

We should be ashamed to call people to depend upon one that is not God, *All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake*, for the sake of his honour and empire. Whither should a people seek but to their God, and is our ministry inviting you to any less? No; as Thomas called him, *My Lord, and my God*, so all the Scripture is written, *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.* Ps. xxii. 27, 28. 2 Cor. iv. 5. John xx. 28. 31.

(6.) We proclaim him as the great Head over all things unto his Church. We own no other authority; but this is so far from being inconsistent with the belief of his divinity, that we durst not say so much of him if he was not God, and had not *the fulness of him, who fills all in all.* Sometimes he has represented his relation to the Church by that of a marriage; and especially the Gentile church is called to remember, that *he is her Lord, and she should worship him:* but how assuming would this be for any creature after the plain language of that ancient promise, *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel, the Lord of the whole earth shall he be called?* Is it likely that one who Eph. i. ult. Ps. xlv. 11. Isa. liv. 5.

is

SERM. 28. is no more than a vicegerent deity would be rival to him who gave this assurance? Or is the Church under the New Testament placed in relation to a lower head than that under the Old? No, his empire shall endure for ever. He is spoken of with
Rev. ii. 23. all governing perfections, One *that searches the hearts, to render to every man according to his*
Mat. xxviii. 20. *works;* one that is *with his people always to the end of the world;* one who lives *in them, and they*
Joh. xiv. 20. *in him; of whose fulness they receive, and grace for*
— i. 16. *grace:* and therefore we must say to Zion, THY GOD *reigns.*

June 7. 1719.

SERMON XXIX.

III. WE are to consider this branch of our religion as a MYSTERY; one of those things that man's wisdom teaches not, and which we can no otherwise know than by *comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* That God should be manifest in the flesh, is a doctrine that appears to our wonder; that he should be justified in the Spirit, carries us still farther beyond our depth; his being seen of Angels, and adored by a nature into which he never entered, swells up the admiration of the believer; and now it is another article of surprise, that he should be *preached among the Gentiles*, if you do but consider the following particulars.

1. It is mysterious, that the Gentiles, who were neglected for so many ages, should have Christ Jesus

SERM. 29.

ſus preached among them. What anſwer can be given to theſe two queſtions? Why God was ſo long ſilent to thoſe people, and why he ſpoke out at laſt? That *the wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhould be glad, and the deſert rejoice, and bloſſom as the roſe: That the glory of Lebanon ſhould be given to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, that they ſhould ſee the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of the God of Iſrael!* We can reſolve it into nothing elſe but his own good pleaſure, *the counſel of his will; even ſo it ſeemed good in his ſight.*

Iſa. xxxv. 1, 2.

You know what diminutive names the methods of Providence drew upon thoſe poor people. The Jews called them no better than *dogs*, and our Saviour himſelf makes uſe of that language. The doctrines of religion were eſteemed *the childrens bread*, and by no means to be *caſt* unto thoſe for whom they were never deſigned. Thus it held for many generations, and yet at laſt, the Goſpel that ſeemed to have crowded up itſelf took pleaſure in a diffuſion. The great God gave ſuch a turn to the courſe of his providence as he never had done before, and unravelled all the diſpoſitions of former ages. They who were *in times paſt Gentiles in the fleſh, called the uncircumciſion by thoſe who were the circumciſion in the fleſh made with hands; at that time they were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Chriſt Jeſus, they who were ſometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.* Well might he ſay, that he would create a new thing in the earth, what had not been conceived or expected.

Eph. ii. 11, 12, 13.

Where ſhall we look for the ſprings of this motion but into that ſovereign goodneſs, *that is gracious becauſe it will be gracious, and ſhews mercy where it will ſhew mercy?* Who can account for the diſtinction that he made between one of Noah's

SERM. 19. posterity from the other two? Why must the revelation of a pure Gospel and a future hope be confined to them? Why did it after that, still run narrower, in the channel of one family? He acted in this as the proprietor of his own mercy, *who gives no account of his matters*, either in grace or nature.

And the question is as hard, why he should afterwards break down the inclosures of his own making, and send abroad without any limitations Eph. iii. 3. 5, 6. that truth that had been so long a peculiar? *By revelation he made known the mystery, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel.* If there was any reason for keeping it as a secret from some part of mankind, why did not that reason hold? Why must the argument of revealing himself to a peculiar people be only temporary, and he who delighted in the name of the God of Israel, take pleasure in being called *the God of the whole earth?*

Was there any likelihood, that they who had been struck off should ever be taken in again? Or that Japhet, who sunk into the same idolatry with Ham, should be *persuaded to dwell in the tents of Shem?* This stands as a wonder in our Bible, and Deut. xxxii. 8, 9. it can appear no otherwise, considering that *when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel; i. e.* in ranging the whole world he had his eye to one nation, and gave the rest their shares, so as to serve the interest of these. *For the Lord's portion was his people, Jacob was the lot of his inheritance*, that which fell to him in the dividend that his providence made: And yet after this, the love that used to keep within bounds shone out at large, and became the glory of the universe.

univerſe. I muſt own, that ſuch a widening of religion was foretold, and therefore could not be a doctrine unknown to the fathers; but if we had taken our notions from appearances, we ſhould have thought that God's choice of the Jews, and his neglect of the Gentiles, had been for eternity. Becauſe, SERM. 19.

2. Theſe Gentiles were no way prepared to receive the news of a Saviour when he came to be preached among them. *All nations walked in their own ways*, and at Athens, in particular, they thought the Apoſtle *a babbler, a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods.* What a train of ceremonies, devotions, deliverances and revelations had the Jews on purpoſe to eſtabliſh their faith, and lead on their hope towards a great Redeemer? Scarce a prophet aroſe, but beſides his meſſage to them, that related to the particular duty and mercy of that day, he was ſtill looking and talking farther, foretelling things to come; as the Apoſtle ſays to the Jews, that Moſes was not only a ſervant to his own day, but a witneſs to ours. He was raiſed up and furniſhed with a greater Spirit than what might bring them out of Egypt. There was a proſpect in all that he ſaid and did, a reference to future generations; for he told them, that *God would raiſe up unto them a Prophet like to him.* Nay, ſaith Peter, *All the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that followed after, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days.* Acts xiv. 16. —xvii. 18. Acts iii. 24.

Though we are apt to run through thoſe books as ſo many hiſtories that reached no farther than to their own ages, yet you ſee he looked upon them all as connected with *thoſe laſt days* in which God has ſpoken to us by his Son. When Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, God did not only promiſe him a great poſterity, and a fine country, but the glory of the covenant lay in this, that *in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.* To this end, when they were formed and modelled into

SERM. 29. into a people, they had laws, judgments, ſtatutes and ordinances. Theſe were *figures for the time preſent, a ſhadow of good things to come.* Thus did God think fit to train them up, that all their worſhip ſhould be directed to him, who is called the great *hope of Iſrael.* That Chriſt ſhould come to *them* in perſon, and be preached among *them* after his reſurrection, is no great wonder, as the Apoſtle
Acts iii. 25, 26. tells them, *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying to Abraham, And in thee ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed. Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you in turning away every one of you from his iniquity.*
——xiii. 46. And to this they gave witneſs in another place, *It was needful that the Goſpel ſhould firſt be preached unto you.* This agrees to the order that Chriſt left with them to *begin at Jeruſalem.* They were a people that ſought him, end enquired diligently af-
Rom. ix. 4, 5. ter him. *Theirs were the fathers, and of them as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came.*

But to the Gentiles he is revealed all at once; not like the ſun in a clear morning that advances and opens his glory by degrees, but rather like a ſudden ruſh of light in a cloudy and dark day.
Iſa. lii. 15. *When he ſprinkles many nations, that which had not been told them ſhall they ſee, and that which they had not heard ſhall they conſider.* This was a matter that could not enter into the imaginations of men, and therefore when the Apoſtle brings in a proof of it out of the Old Teſtament, he delivers it with
Rom. x. 20. this remark, that *Eſaias is very bold,* he dares to ſay it, *I was found of them that ſought me not, I was made manifeſt to them that aſked not after me:* So he
——ix. 25. ſaith in Oſee, *I will call them my people who were not my people, and her beloved, that was not beloved.*

They are to hear of him without any preparation of types and ſacrifices. They had no *paſchal lamb* to tell them of the great atonement, no *high-*

prieſt

prieſt to repreſent the perſon of a Mediator, no *ſprinkling of blood* to ſignify the virtue of his death, no *temple* to be an earneſt of his incarnation: He came to them without any preliminary. This was the manner of entering that the Goſpel had among them, *That they turned at once from idols to ſerve the living and true God.* SERM. 29. 1 Theſ. i. 9.

Though God was very near two thouſand years in training one nation for a Redeemer, yet without any dawn he darts the light of the glorious Goſpel among others. Upon which the Apoſtle puts the queſtion, *What ſhall we ſay then? q. d.* we are quite loſt in the myſtery, and know not either how to get into it, or how to get out of it. It is an entertainment, but yet it is a ſurpriſe, *That the Gentiles who followed not after righteouſneſs*, never pretended to it, that theſe *have attained unto righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs which is of faith.* Well may we ſay, *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways are paſt finding out! Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, and who has been his counſellor?* 'Who gave certain rules to 'that Spirit for ſo many ages, how to guide and 'proportion the light that he diſtributed? Or who 'at laſt ſet him at liberty, to do in redemption as 'he did in creation, to move upon the face of the 'waters, and bring light out of darkneſs all over 'the world?' Rom. ix. 30. —xi. 33, 34.

What conſiſtency can we find between the methods of Providence in former ages, and thoſe he has taken now? They thought that the Godhead was like to *ſilver, gold, or ſtone, graven by art and man's device: And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent: Becauſe he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he has ordained; whereof he has given aſſurance to all men in raiſing him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 29, 30, 31.

3. It

SERM. 29.

3. It is ſtill more myſterious, that the Jews ſhould reject a Saviour who was to be preached among the Gentiles. This I mention only as an introduction to the following head. That He who
Hag. ii. 7. was to be the *deſire of all nations*, ſhould be the
Joh. i. 11. contempt of his own; for *he came to his own, and his own received him not.* And when Moſes is read,
2 Cor. iii. 15. who teſtified of him, *To this day the vail is upon their hearts, for they cannot ſee to the end of thoſe things that were to be aboliſhed.* All the preparations of ſacrifice, worſhip, types and promiſes were
Joh. v. 39. loſt upon them. They *ſearched the Scriptures*, in hopes of finding eternal life; and yet though theſe
——40. were they that teſtified of him, *they would not come unto him that they might have life.* The chief-prieſts, who had the beſt education and opportunity to know his character, *the princes of the world,*
1 Cor. ii. 8. were ſtrangers to the wiſdom we preach, for *had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* Theſe raged with an envy as high as their ſtation; and the admirers of the temple-ſervice, whoſe devotion ſhould have led them towards him, purſued his doctrine and his life with all the
Rom. ix. 31, 32. violence they could uſe. *Iſrael which followed after the law of righteouſneſs has not attained to the law of righteouſneſs. Wherefore? becauſe they ſought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone.* Now is it not much, that He who was to be the Saviour of the world, and bring a bleſſing to all the families of the earth, ſhould be thus unknown in a country where he had been expected? That he ſhould *find no faith* where there had been ſo much *viſion?* And yet,

4. After his diſgrace from the Jews he is made
Iſa. xlix. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. the ſubject of our miniſtry. He ſaid, *I have laboured in vain, and have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, yet ſurely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, ſaith the Lord, who formed*

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ed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Ja- SERM. 29.
cob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to a servant of rulers; kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, and to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.

If we had considered the revelation of a Saviour, as an attempt made upon the world, how far it would take, we should think it in vain to go any further after this miscarriage among a chosen people. It was time to give up the design, as that which was never like to succeed, or bring forth fruit to account. But this was no hinderance, for *through the fall of the Jews, salvation is come to the* Rom. xi. 11, *Gentiles, the diminishing of them was the riches of* 12. *the world.* If *they* did not receive him, who had been waiting for him, and had conversed with him in types and shadows, how could it be expected that the uncultivated part of mankind should harbour a Gospel of which they had no warning?

And yet so it was; for the usage he met with from the Jews, and which delivered his name to so much contempt among them, became a part of the doctrine which was preached among the Gentiles, I mean his *obedience to death, even the death of the cross.* It was an objection against him then,

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SERM. 29. Mat. xxvii. 42. *He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the Christ of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe.* As he did not come down, it was a protection to their infidelity. They then thought themselves justified to all the world, in calling him a deceiver; so that though he had done many miracles, and taught the will of God perfectly, yet this last reproach, his dying in a cursed way, razed out all his former character, and made every thing he had said or done pass for nothing.

And yet with this disadvantageous article did the Apostles go out into the world. They made no secret of that death which the enemy derided: 1 Cor. ii. 2. *They preached Christ Jesus and him crucified.* And is it not strange, that a doctrine which startled the Jews, in the very sound, should be received by the Gentiles? To a Jew such a principle must Acts xvii. 3. be proved. When they *opened and alleged that Christ must needs have suffered*, it could be only out of *their* writings, but to the Gentiles this was a thing totally unknown; they had no prophecies, no types or sacrifice of divine appointment to be the figures of a propitiation to come, and yet with these unconceivable doctrines were preachers to go abroad. They were not ashamed of the cross of Christ, but *gloried* in it. Through that truth they declared a God who *pardoned iniquity, transgression and sin*, and brought to the world the glad tidings of salvation and eternity.

And is it not much, that this article should make its way among the Gentiles, which had been derided by the people who alone were prepared to Mark xii. 10, 11. receive it? That *the stone rejected of the builders should be afterwards made the head of the corner: This is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* The Jews and the priests among them were the builders by profession, and by distinction: They rejected a Stone of the greatest value, and

yet this is made the head of the corner! The ground of that whole building, which *fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord:* The vaſt fabric that takes in the people of God all over the earth; and this is the doing of the Lord: ſo is every thing in providence, but it is *his work* in a more eminent ſenſe, it expreſſes his wiſdom, his ſovereignty and univerſal goodneſs, it is full of his glory, it bears his image, and it is wondrous in our eyes; in the very eyes of a believer it does not ceaſe to be a myſtery. They ſee ſomething in it that ſhews the contrivance is to be rather admired than explained. We ſtand amazed at it, as that which carries up our thoughts ſo far, that we can neither get forwards nor backwards, can neither leave the ſubject with indifference, nor comprehend it with knowledge. SERM. 29. Eph. ii. 21.

5. That Chriſt ſhould be preached to the Gentiles, is what he himſelf put a bar in the way of. He acted all along as a Jew, as *a miniſter of the circumciſion.* He ſubmitted to their ordinances, worſhipped at their temple, converſed only with them, never begun the practice of that religion that was to obtain after his death. He continued an example of the ceremonial worſhip as long as he lived. He acquainted the poor woman of Canaan with the general rule of his practice, that *he was not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.* He charged the ſeventy diſciples *not to go into the way of the Gentiles, or enter into any city or village of the Samaritans.*

Who would think, by ſuch a method of living, that he had any deſign of extending his Goſpel beyond his miniſtry? or that the one ſhould go where the other never came? What pains did he take with *the generation of his wrath?* How did he purſue them with doctrines, ſtrike them with miracles, do thoſe works among them that never man did? and yet they *hated both him and his Father.* John xv. 24.

SERM. 29. *ther.* What a concern did he ſhew for them at laſt, when he paſſed the great ſentence upon them;
Luke xix. 42. for *when he beheld that city, he wept over it, and ſaid, O that thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes!* It is apparent, as he ſpeaks by the Prophet, that *his bowels were turned within him, and his repentings kindled together.* He knew not how to give them up, to make them *as Admah, and ſet them as Zeboim.* None of this pity diſcovers itſelf to thoſe that were then without Chriſt, *and aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael.* He never makes them one viſit, or ſends them one meſſage; and yet that ungrateful nation, who had been ſo long his favourites, were to be caſt off, and left to a *ſpirit of ſlumber;* and, on the other hand, the Gentiles, who ſeemed to have ſo little room in his thoughts, were to have the diſtinction of his love.

Acts i. 8. He orders the Apoſtles to be his *witneſſes to the uttermoſt ends of the earth;* and it is not unlikely that he might acquaint them with the ſucceſs of
—— xxii. 18. their Goſpel as he did Paul, *Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem, for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning me.* Thus he ſaith
—— xxviii. 25, 26, 27, 28. to thoſe at Rome, *Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the Prophet to our fathers, ſaying, Go unto this people, and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear and ſhall not underſtand, and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee and ſhall not perceive, i. e.* they were to have the means of grace to no purpoſe: *But be it known unto you, that the ſalvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.*

It is ſtrange he ſhould act as if he never knew that before. Why did he not make a trial in his own lifetime, what good was to be done in thoſe parts of the earth that had all along lain waſte? Why did he not break up the fallow-ground himſelf, but leave it all to be done by his diſciples?

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He was the great subject of the ministry into which he put his servants, but in many cases he was not their example. They preach where he did not; they go where he would never come; and it is rather after his death than during his life, that he is *to lighten the Gentiles*, and be a salvation *to the ends of the earth.* SERM. 29.

6. This was a thing never to be conceived of by the Jews. As their minds were blinded to a Saviour, so they were towards a Gospel, and one great end of sending it into the world. The passages are plain enough, that he was to be *the desire of all nations* and the *governor* among them; that all *the gathering of the people would be to him*, and *all the families of the earth blessed in him;* that the *barren who did not bear was to sing aloud, for more were the children of the desolate than of the married wife.* Such promises as these lie thick in the Old Testament, and yet when there is any mention of a design that way, the Jews received it as a piece of blasphemy or enthusiasm. Thus when Christ tells them, *Whither I go ye cannot come*, what is their way of expounding it? *Whither will he go that we cannot find him? will he go and teach the Gentiles, or to the dispersed among the Gentiles?* You see by the latter part of that sentence, that they could hardly conceive him guilty of so monstrous a thing as that he should go to teach the Gentiles, but only the dispersed among them, the Jews who were scattered abroad. Hag. ii. 7. Psal. xxii. 28. Gen. xlix. 10. Isa. liv. 1, 2.

What an offence was it that he should receive publicans, and eat with them? When Zaccheus invited him to his house, they were startled: *This man is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.* They did not mean one that is partaker of a polluted nature, for all are sinners in that sense; but a foreigner, a Gentile, one that was defiled by his profession, who lay out of the pale of the church, and was a sinner by birth: They thought it quite wrong Luke xix. 7.

SERM. 29. wrong in a Prophet, and much more in a Saviour, to go into the houſe of ſuch a one. And the explication he gives was not very ſatisfactory to them, that *this man is alſo a ſon of Abraham.* That title was founded on the real ſenſe and meaning of the promiſe; but it would be very ſtrange to thoſe that heard it.

And you need be in no ſurpriſe, that after his death the Apoſtles drew all the enmity of the Jews upon them, whenever they talked of the extent of their own commiſſion. Thus was Paul received in the defence that he made; he runs over a noble argument, full of learning and evidence; he gives them the ſtory of his own converſion, a fact that could neither be denied nor borne down: But when
Acts xxii. 21, 22. he mentions the divine order, *Depart, for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles*, it is ſaid, *they gave him audience to this word, and then lift up their voices, crying, Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he ſhould live.* The very naming of that deſign is what they could not endure; ſo far had pride poſſeſſed itſelf of every faculty, that they were uncapable of thinking about ſuch a matter, as if it was in their power to have contradicted that argument: *Is he the God of the Jews, and not of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles alſo.*

They imagined that a converſation with theſe poor people was defiling, as Peter owns in his
—— x. 28. ſpeech to Cornelius: *Ye know that it is unlawful for a Jew to keep company, or come to one of another nation.* They make a heavy charge againſt Paul, and would deliver him over to the tumult of the
—— xxi. 28. people: *Help, O men of Iſrael, for this is the man who teaches all men every where againſt the law; and further, has alſo brought Greeks into the temple, to pollute this holy place:* Though this is what they had but an imperfect evidence of, for *they had ſeen before with him in the city, Trophimus an Epheſian,*

whom

whom they ſuppoſed Paul had brought into the temple. SERM. 29.
The cry moves the city, the people run together, and are going about to kill him. Such a myſtery was this to thoſe to whom God had committed the lively oracles, that they were not able to make it paſs upon their minds, that there could be any mercy for the reſt of the world.

7. It is what the Apoſtles themſelves came into very unwillingly; their thoughts were of a national caſt as well as others; and this ſtuck by them a long time. For after his reſurrection, when he tells them they muſt *wait for the promiſe of the Father which they had heard of him*, they immediately catch at that as a political mercy: *Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael?* Acts i. 6. he anſwers them, *It is not for you to know the times and ſeaſons, which the Father has put in his own power;* but then tells them, that this promiſe was for other ends, that *they* might be *his witneſſes in Jeruſalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermoſt parts of the earth.*

You find, after this, with what reluctance they went away farther than their own country. The perſecution that aroſe about Stephen was a means to ſcatter them to Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, *preaching the word to none but the Jews only.* xi. 19.
Philip about the ſame time is driven to Samaria, where he had mighty ſucceſs, for *many believed in the name of the Lord, and there was great joy in that city.* Peter has a viſion which brings him an account of his duty, and anſwers the arguments that he had raiſed againſt it. For when he ſaith, upon the deſcending of that ſheet that had four-footed beaſts and creeping things, *Lord, I have never eaten any thing common or unclean: the voice ſaith to him, What God has cleanſed, call not thou common.* This he knew not the meaning of till he went to Cornelius, and there he delivers the ſenſe

of

SERM. 29. of the vision: *I perceive God is no respecter of per-*
Acts x. 34, *sons, but in every nation he that fears him, and works*
35. *righteousness, is accepted of him:* and says farther, *God has shewn me that I ought to call no man common.*

One would think there was very little need of these extraordinary methods to impress upon them so plain a duty as that of preaching to the Gentiles; and yet the prejudice of education lay so deep, that it must be rooted out by an uncommon argument. Nay, the good people who attended
ver. 45. him are amazed, *when they saw the Holy Ghost descend upon the Gentiles.* What! could they imagine that the Holy Ghost was not a free agent? Had not Christ told them, he blows where he listeth? Besides, Peter is forced to argue upon this conviction: *Can any man forbid water why these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* Nay, after this, the very Apostles and
Acts xi. 3. brethren object it against him: *Thou wentest to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.* Upon which he is obliged to *rehearse the matter from the beginning*, and he reckons it no less than *a withstanding of God*, if he should have acted otherwise.

Saul had his commission at his conversion. Christ
—— xxvi. saith to him, *I will deliver thee from the people,*
18, 19, 20. *and the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God, that they may receive remission of their sins.* And he comes readily into it, as he tells the king: *Whereupon, O Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but shewed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.* We find indeed all along, that he made his first addresses to the Jews. When he came to Antioch, in Pisidia, he got into one of their synagogues, and introduces his discourse

courſe in this manner: *Men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give audience:* and upon their refuſal, he tells them, *It was needful that the word of God ſhould firſt be ſpoken to you; but ſeeing that ye have put it far from you, and judged yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles; for ſo the Lord has commanded us, ſaying, I have ſet thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldſt be for ſalvation to the ends of the earth.* And as Chriſt had told him, that having borne witneſs for him at Jeruſalem, he ſhould alſo bear teſtimony for him at Rome; when he comes thither, he firſt ſends for the Jews, and tells them, that *though he had committed nothing againſt the people and cuſtoms of their fathers, yet he was delivered priſoner to the Romans; for which cauſe,* ſaith he, *I have ſent for you, to ſee and to ſpeak with you, becauſe for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this chain.* And when he found his labours among them in vain, then he talks of *turning to the Gentiles:* So that after that, *he dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received* ALL *that came to him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things that concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all confidence.*

SERM. 29. Acts xiii. 16. ver. 46, 47. Acts xxviii. 20.

8. It is ſome part of the wonder, that the preaching among the Gentiles ſhould be put into ſuch hands: *Are not theſe men that ſpeak Galileans? and how is it that we hear among them in our own tongues the wonderful works of God?* Had he raiſed up at firſt, as he did afterwards, perſons out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, who were acquainted with the language and methods of their own country, it had not been ſo much.

— ii. 8. 11.

But he makes choice of a company of Jews who were every where hated: *Theſe men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to believe, being Romans.* Theſe he furniſhes with *all qualifications:*

— xvi. 20, 21.

SERM. 29. *qualifications:* they have the gift of tongues, by which they are endued with power from on high. This was a mighty wonder indeed, and therefore the Apoſtle puts it upon the rewards of Chriſt for his ſufferings; *being exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he has ſhed forth that which ye now ſee and hear.*

Nor is it leſs remarkable that men of a private life ſhould be called to ſtand it out againſt the face of the world: That perſons of a low education, who were no way prepared for hurry and buſtle, ſhould come joyfully into a fatigue that carried in it all manner of dangers. What can we aſcribe this to, but *the power of Chriſt reſting upon them? God bare them witneſs by divers ſigns, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* They were never either to be hired or daunted from their duty; but went *through honour and diſhonour, good report and bad report, as deceivers, and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known.* They were deſpiſed and miſrepreſented; and becauſe their doctrine was unwelcome, therefore their perſons were hated. And indeed this is the conſtant lot of thoſe that will be faithful. The Apoſtle tells Timothy, there are *ſome who reſiſt the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.* But, ſaith he, by way of encouragement, *Thou haſt fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering, charity, patience, perſecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lyſtra, what perſecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

Heb. ii. 4.

2 Cor. vi. 8, 9.

2 Tim iii. 10, 11.

SERMON XXX.

June 21. 1719.

SERM. 30.

THIS laſt particular may be diſtributed into ſeveral others that are contained in it: as, That he fetched men out of a private life into a ſervice for which their education had no way prepared them: That he had made them run into dangers which they might have ſhunned; and *that* with the greateſt alacrity and obedience: That he furniſhed them with the gift of tongues, which had never been known in the world before; and that he called moſt of them to ſeal the truth with their blood, that they might give the greateſt teſtimony of nature to the doctrines of grace.

1. The perſons he employed were no way prepared by education for that life of public ſervice into which he called them: *He choſe the fooliſh things of this world to confound the wiſe, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty: And baſe things of the world, and things deſpiſed, nay, things that are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence.* He that had the earth, and the fulneſs thereof, could eaſily have ſupplied himſelf with the beſt of its learning; but it ſtands among the wonders and delights of a Saviour, that he run croſs to the expectations and meaſures of human reaſon. 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29.

That might be called a polite age with as much truth as any other. The zeal of the Jews for the ritual part of devotion went higher than ever it had done: *They reſted in the law, and approved the things* Rom. ii. 18, 19, 20.

SERM. 30. *things that were more excellent: they made their boaſt of God, and were confident that they themſelves were guides of the blind, and inſtructors of the fooliſh, having a form of knowledge and of truth in the law.* And yet both in giving holineſs, and granting commiſſions, he ſlides over men of ſhining parts, and vaſt attainments, and chooſes his ſervants where no one elſe would have done. It is this, I ſay, that gave our dear Redeemer a pleaſure at his very ſoul:

Mat. xi. 25, 26. *In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: Even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* He alſo affirms his own ſhare in the great diſpoſal: *All things are delivered to me by my Father, and no man knows who the Son is, but the Father, and none knows who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* So that what is called the Father's making known theſe things to babes in one verſe, is called the *Son's revealing* them in another: And as he had aſcribed it to the mere ſovereign pleaſure of God, ſo here it is repreſented as his own choice. It is the Son's own *will* that inclines him to make the revelation. It ſtands in this account as a free and ſpontaneous act. And he that made known theſe things is conſidered three ways, which are all wonderful.

Firſt, That this was not owing to any ſcarcity in the creation, for he that does it is *Lord of heaven and earth.* He could have committed the Goſpel, as he did the Law, *to the diſpoſition of Angels*, being the Sovereign of that upper world where they are; or he could have furniſhed himſelf from the ſchools of the Gentiles, and the temple of the Jews, with men who were either *mighty in the Scriptures*, or maſters in the faculty of turning an argument. But,

Secondly,

Secondly, Inſtead of employing them as neceſſary to his cauſe, he threw a vail over their glory: *He hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent:* they above all others fell at this *ſtumbling-ſtone:* As it was foretold that the foundation laid in Sion would be *a rock of offence, a gin and a ſnare to both the houſes of Iſrael, and the inhabitants in Jeruſalem.* None of the princes of this world knew the wiſdom that we preach, as appears by their crucifying the Lord of glory. Theſe men that were wiſe and prudent, not only in their own opinion, but in the public voice of fame, are all in the dark about the great article of ſalvation. And, SERM. 30.

Thirdly, Theſe things he reveals unto babes; ſometimes to ſuch as were *literally ſo; for out of the mouths of ſucklings he ordained ſtrength.* Of this he gave the world a ſample at his triumphant entry into Jeruſalem, when *the children ſung before him, Hoſannah to the Son of David, Bleſſed be the kingdom of the Lord, Hoſannah in the higheſt.* To this they were preſſed by a miraculous influence, as he ſaith, *If theſe ſhould altogether hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.* But I believe the name that he calls them by ſignifies *the lowneſs of their preparation*, that they were no more fit for the deſign than ſo many *babes:* they were ſo far from ſpeaking other tongues, that they could hardly ſpeak their own. This is a thing that our Lord contemplates a long while before it was accompliſhed. He does not only acquieſce in it, *So Father, it ſeemed good in thy ſight*, but it made him *rejoice in ſpirit.* Though but a little before, he had complained how vain his own attempts had been for the reformation of the world in Chorazin and Bethſaida, yet *in that hour* he felt all theſe joys within him. Pſ. viii. 2. Luke xix. 37 Mat. xxi. 9.

And whom did he chuſe, but men of an obſcure character? *Where is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world? has not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?* How? by laying 1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

SERM. 30. laying all aſide in ſpreading the Goſpel: *For after that in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God: it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believe.* It was once reckoned wonderful, that he matched the employment of his ſervant in a private life, to what he deſigned him for of a more public nature: *He choſe David from following the ſheep, and feeding the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob his people, and Iſrael his inheritance.* There is both a beauty and a ſurpriſe in the ſimilitude. And ſo he did here: He calls a company of perſons out of ſhips or boats where they were mending their nets, and tells them, he would make them *fiſhers of men.* Upon this they forſook all and followed him: a ſtrange call, and a ſtrange obedience!

Pſ. lxxviii. 70, 71.

Moſes though he had been brought up at court, and was ſkilled in all the wiſdom and learning of the Egyptians, cries out, *Lord, who am I that I ſhould ſpeak to Pharaoh?* He pleads his being of *uncircumciſed lips*, by which, I ſuppoſe, he means ſome unhappineſs in his pronunciation; becauſe God gives him theſe anſwers: *Who has made man's mouth? or who made the dumb? and I know that Aaron thy brother can ſpeak well.* But there is more room for the objection in a company of poor people who ſcarce ever went farther than the lake of Tiberias. Might not they have thought it an extraordinary propoſal, to be told that they ſhould go over the world, and confront the learning of all the places that they came into, by the ſucceſs of their Goſpel, *leading princes away ſpoiled, and making judges fools? Ye ſhall be brought,* ſaith their great Maſter, *before kings and rulers for my name's ſake, and it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer; for I will give you a mouth and a wiſdom which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or reſiſt.*

Luke xxi. 12, 13, 14, 15.

This

This was a surprise to the council at Jerusalem: SERM. 30. *They perceived the boldness of Peter and John, and* Acts iv. 13. *seeing that they were ignorant and unlearned men, they marvelled at it, and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.* So that here, you see, they renew the questions that had been put about Christ himself: How *knows this man letters, having never learned?* and, *Is not this the carpenter's son;* Mar. vi. 3. *from whence then had he these mighty works?* And yet they perceived in them such a boldness as gave them a great deal more than a courage to speak; for that of itself is not always an excellency: but this took into it the several capacities of reasoning, that they spake with an evidence that was neither to be daunted nor evaded.

Was it likely, that in such hands as these the greatest wisdom that was ever made known to the world should get forwards into the nations afar off, and, like the power of the sun, nothing should be hid from the heat that attended it? This is a mystery indeed, and shews the value of that effusion in which the Spirit was given out. For these disciples were very raw and unprepared, even after Christ's resurrection, to undertake a matter of so much importance. They did not understand the nature of that kingdom which they were to preach; but when they were endued with a power from on high, it was a sending forth both *of light and truth.* As our Lord tells them, *I have many things to say,* Joh. xvi. *but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when He the* 12, 13. *Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* He made them ministers *according to the* Eph. iii. 7. *gift of the grace of God, given to them by the effectual working of his power.*

2. It is still farther a mystery, in the way that God took to spread this Gospel among the Gentiles, that he should raise up these men to run all manner of dangers, who might have lived secure and protected: *He set forth the Apostles, as it were ap-* 1 Cor. iv.

SERM. 30. *pointed to death; they were made a ſpectacle to the world, to Angels, and to men; fools for Chriſt's ſake, weak and deſpiſed: they hungered and thirſted, were naked and buffeted, and had no certain dwelling place: they laboured, working with their own hands; reviled, perſecuted, defamed, made the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things.* And yet he dealt fairly by them: He gave them ſuch warnings and inſtructions about the work, as would rather have frighted people than perſuaded them in-

Joh. xvi. 2, 3. to it: *The time comes that he that kills you will think he does God ſervice; and theſe things they will do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father nor me.* He tells Peter, in particular, *When thou waſt young, thou wenteſt whither thou wouldſt*, that

—— xxi. 18, 19. part of thy life was eaſy enough; *but when thou ſhalt be old, they ſhall bind thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldſt not; and this he ſaid ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorify God.*

But that very conſideration of his death made

2 Pet. i. 14. it eaſy to him; he calls it no more than *putting off this tabernacle, as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt had ſhewed*

Phil. i. 20. *to him.* Another Apoſtle ſaith, this was *his earneſt expectation and deſire, that in all things Chriſt may be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or death.* Many of his followers, when he opened to

Joh. vi. 66. them the hardſhips that were coming on, *went back, and walked no more with him.* Swarms of ſuch as thoſe have gone off in every age; Demas

2 Tim. i. 15. forſook Paul, and *all they in Aſia left him.* But Chriſt knew whom he had choſen, and the virtue

Act xv. 26. of that choice. There were many who *hazarded their lives for the ſake of the Lord Jeſus.* It is almoſt an indiſputable maxim in our day, that take away preferments and rewards from preachers, and the church is in danger; but here are miniſters that had not ſo much as an human protection. I hope then the number of hirelings in this age leaves us in no doubt of the *myſtery* that ever Chriſt

ſhould

SERM. 30.

ſhould be preached to the Gentiles, by thoſe who *approved themſelves the miniſters of God in much patience, afflictions, neceſſities, diſtreſſes; in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults.* This is well expreſſed by a Poet of our own: 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

Whence, but from Heav'n, could men, unſkill'd in arts,
In ſev'ral ages born, in ſev'ral parts,
Weave ſuch agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conſpire to cheat us with a lye?
Unaſk'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

3. The great wonder of all is, that they ſhould be qualified with the gift of tongues. This was a thing never heard of before; it only came to paſs in the laſt days. God uſually employed his prophets in their own country, or in thoſe neighbouring kingdoms where the language was much the ſame; but here are men ſent to all nations, to *every creature under heaven*, and wherever they come, they have no need to ſpeak by an interpreter, which is both a ſlow and a cold way of converſation. And this he deſigned to diſtinguiſh as a myſtery, becauſe it is the peculiar of that age, and that ſet of preachers: for *tongues were to ceaſe*, and this ſort of *knowledge to vaniſh away.* As no generation had it before, ſo none had it after; for which we may give ſeveral reaſons. Col. i. 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

This was to be the handſel of a Redeemer's government below, and the firſt aſſurance of his welcome above. He had but newly left his diſciples, not without the contempt of the world, and ſome diffidence in themſelves. What they wanted to know was, whether this death which had been ſo ſcandalous on earth, had met with any more credit in heaven, and to be ſecure that his empire among men was eſtabliſhed, and ſhould be promoted. Well, this they are to be convinced of by ſuch an effuſion of the Spirit, as was never known

to

SERM. 30. to their fathers, and ſhould never be renewed to their children: *He being exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhed forth that which they*
Heb. ii. 3, 4. *ſaw and heard.* Thus *the ſalvation, that began to be ſpoke to the world by the Lord Jeſus, was afterwards confirmed by thoſe that heard him, God bearing them witneſs by divers ſigns, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* Theſe tongues were to be for a *ſign* that the commiſſion was from God, and alſo a *means* of making
Rom. xvi. 26. known to the Gentiles what was appointed *for obedience of faith among all nations through the name of Chriſt.*

At the building of Babel, which the ſons of men deſigned for a tower to reach to heaven, God came down and confounded their language. This was a new embarraſſment to the truth; it was from that time a great deal harder for people to help one another in uſeful knowledge. But here was going to be another tower, that ſhould actually reach *to heaven, a building of God, an houſe not made with hands:* he therefore comes down, and razes out the former confuſion. Though the world continued to talk many languages, yet he furniſhed a ſet of men with capacities to ſpeak
Acts ii. 4. Dan xii. 4. Mark xvi. 19, 20. them all: *They ſpake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Thus *many ran to and fro, and knowledge was increaſed. After the Lord had ſpoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God; and they went forth, and preached every where.*

4. He called moſt of them to ſeal this truth with their blood, which was the higheſt teſtimony that
Rev. xii. 11. nature could give to what grace had taught: *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their teſtimony;* no terror could drive them from it. By their fall they conquered; their dying was voluntary, *they loved not their lives unto the death.*

There

There was something else which they loved better. SERM. 30.
Now, this is so far from being a duty, that by the law of nature, it is the greatest of sins. It is also against all the course of nature; it over-rules the first principle in it, and that is self-preservation: *No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but loved and cherished it.* And when any were witnesses to a cause that way, you must suppose they had in them either something below nature, or something above it.

And yet thus it was with them: Paul at his conversion was shewn *what great things he should suffer for the name of Christ:* it was but a rough setting out, for the Jews to *go about to kill him,* as soon as he began to preach the Gospel. He had a narrow escape from *Aretas the king of Damascus, when he was let down the wall by a basket.* He was thrown out of all the favour and fame that he had so long courted in the Jewish nation, and yet he looks back upon it with a noble unconcern: *He counted it but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, that he might win Christ.* He was in *labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times he received forty stripes save one. Thrice he was beaten with rods, once he was stoned, thrice he suffered shipwreck, a day and a night he was in the deep; in journeyings often; in perils of waters, robbers, by his own countrymen, heathens, in the city, the wilderness, the sea, and among false brethren.* Nor did these things grieve and tire him out; but when *the time of his departure is at hand, he is ready to be offered up, having fought a good fight, and finished his course, and kept the faith,* without which all the rest had been impossible.

Acts ix. 16.
2 Cor. xi. ult.
Phil. iii. 8.
2 Cor. xi. 23.—27.
2 Tim. iv. 6, 7.

Now, let us see FOR WHOM they did this.

1. It is plain they took it for the cause of *Christ.*
2. They depended upon *his* presence with them.

SERM. 30. 3. This was as much as they could *do* for God, and as much as they could *expect* from him.

1. It is evident by all the profeſſion they made, that this was for the ſake of Chriſt. They were
Col. i. 28. *witneſſes of him;* they bore *the teſtimony of Jeſus,*
Acts ix. 6. *whom they preached, warning every man. Lord, what wilt* THOU *have me to do?* was the language
ver. 17. of Saul. Ananias tells him, *The Lord, even Jeſus who appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameſt, has ſent me to thee that thou mighteſt know* HIS *will,*
Acts xxii. 14, 15. *and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* He was to *ſee that juſt One, and hear the word of* HIS *mouth, and be* HIS *witneſs to all men.* The Goſpel that he
Gal i. 12. preached was *neither received of man, nor by man,*
Acts xxvi. 16. *but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. To this purpoſe,* ſaith our Saviour, *have I appeared unto thee, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs of theſe things that thou haſt ſeen, and thoſe in which I will farther*
1 Cor. ii. 2. *appear unto thee. He determined to know,* or make known *nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified;* which in the former verſe he had called *the teſtimony of* GOD. He preached not himſelf, but *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord,* and himſelf a ſervant for *Jeſus' ſake,* ſtill referring the ultimate glory thither.
Rom. i. 9. Sometimes they were called *the ſervants of God in the Goſpel of his Son,* and *the ſervants of the Moſt high God, who ſhewed the way of ſalvation.* Thus ſaith Paul, *God is my record, whom I ſerve with a pure conſcience.* But theſe expreſſions are ſo thrown in common with others, of our preaching, ſerving and obeying Chriſt, that if they do not mean the ſame, here are two things unhappily confounded
—— i. 16. in one deſcription. *The Goſpel of Chriſt* is called *the power of God.*

2. In this work they depended on HIS preſence with them. He would not leave them comfortleſs,
John xx. 20. but *come and ſee them.* After his reſurrection, *the diſciples were glad when they ſaw the Lord. He*
Acts i. 3. *ſpake to them forty days of things pertaining to the kingdom*

kingdom of GOD. This was delightful converſation indeed! They were afraid of the Jews, and had the doors ſhut; but when Jeſus came in, thoſe fears would ſoon be over. He might ſay then with more impreſſion than he had done before, *It is I, be not afraid.* During that ſtage, between his coming out of the grave, and his going up into glory, they were raiſed above all their troubles. But, what ſhould they do afterwards, when, as he tells them, they muſt *ſee him no more?* that is, they were to *know him no more after the fleſh.* SERM. 30.

Well, that they might be provided for all dangers, when he ſends them to diſciple all nations, he promiſes to be *with them always to the end of the world.* I do not envy our critics all their gains by the interpretation of theſe words, *viz.* that they ſignify no more than to the end of that age. For though that uncomfortable expoſition may be eaſily diſſolved, yet *even this* carries more in it than they would gladly allow. For according to their own way of reckoning, Chriſt might be preſent with the Apoſtles after he was gone to heaven; that he could be both upon earth and in heaven at one time; and if he could do this for the ſpace of forty years, he can as eaſily do it till the conſummation of all things. It was this that carried the Apoſtles through all their troubles. *I will deliver thee,* ſaith he to Paul, *from the people, and the Gentiles, to whom I ſend thee.* And when he ſpeaks of the ſucceſs of this promiſe that was given him by Chriſt, he calls it *obtaining help from* GOD. The one is plainly matched unto the other, being only two parts of the ſame ſpeech. Mat. xxviii. 20. Acts xxvi. 22.

3. This was as much duty as they could pay to the great God, and this preſence as much as they could expect from him. Was it only a creature, for the advancing of whoſe kingdom there were ſuch preparations made, as the world never knew before? Conſider three things; he had the greateſt glory

SERM. 30. glory that ever was given, the most entire duty that could ever be paid, and he maintained this interest in the most divine way that ever was heard of.

(1.) The glory designed for him was of the greatest sort. It exceeded all that could be fetch-
Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3. ed out of the creation. *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament shews his handy-work. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night declares knowledge; and there is no voice or language where their speech is not heard.* What Lord is this who has his honour so established in those bright and rolling worlds, but the Lord that made them? the Supreme Being, *by whom are all things, and for whom are all things?* The Scrip-
Heb. i. 10. ture has shewn us that this is his work, *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heaven is the work of his hands.*

And therefore that notion, that the great God created the second Person, and then ordered him to make the world, must be handled very gently, or it will be crushed before the moth. We read of no such *round-about creation.* The Bible represents all these things as done by his own voice; *He spake and it was done, he commanded and it*
Ps. xxxiii. 6, 7. *stood fast: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.* We read of no such officer as the new scheme calls an instrument. We understand no other author of the universe than Him who has the glory of it. Not an angel in heaven dare arrogate to himself the making of a worm, the rearing up of a plant; no, they talk of the world as the
Rev. iv. ult. immediate production of Omnipotence: *Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and*
Heb. xi. 3. *were created. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen, were not made of things*

that

that do appear. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things, that brings out their host by number; he calls them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power. SERM. 30. Isa. xl. 26.

But now there is a greater glory than this; that is, there is a nobler design, and a more wondrous performance,—the redemption of a chosen people. The Scripture has given this the preference, and the honour of it is left upon Christ, not as exclusive of the Father, but in such a way as is maintained by what he saith, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* And again, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself.* He speaks this of the success of that great design that he came about. There is more of God to be seen in this affair than there was in any other, and where are we to look for it? Well, he that *brought light out of darkness, gives us the light of the glory of God in the face* or person *of Jesus Christ.* John xiv. 11. — xiii. 31, 32. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

And can we think that the Supreme God is to rejoice in the work of his hands, that the earth is full of his riches? Is he to be honoured in what we see he has done? And shall a glory much greater and more sublime be given to one who *by nature is no God?* Shall he who has the name only by virtue of an office have an extent of empire which the Father never claimed? Shall *all the ends of the earth look* unto the Son, and he be no more than a titular Deity; when the real God was only known in Judah, and had his name great in Israel? Must there be an effusion of the Spirit, a gift of tongues, a thing that never had been in the world before, and it is likely never shall be again, and all this to establish the interest of a creature? For it is Christ in whom *all the seed of Israel are to be justified, and to glory.*

SERM. 30. The Gospel of the kingdom is called *the world to come*, and methinks there is a dignity in the title; it was future to the Jews, it is the last dispensation that God will give, and it bears upon it the glory of the state above. Now it is observed, Heb. ii. 5. that *to none of the Angels has he put in subjection the world to come of which we speak.* He has put kingdoms and armies in subjection to an Angel, by making him the minister of Providence; but here is an affair that none of them must preside in: And can we imagine, that so much care should be taken to tell us, that not one of the Angels has this dominion, and yet that it is given to another creature? If he is so very express and peremptory in laying aside the Angels, we should have thought it was because he has so often said, *His glory he will not give to another.* And therefore how comes one who was less than an Angel to have it, but from the consideration of a nature more *above* theirs than what he took upon him was *below* them? You find the Angels praising God for creating *the heavens and the earth, and the fountains of waters;* and yet the Lamb is proclaimed as the author of a much greater work. The lower the grosser glories are ascribed to the Supreme God, and will he communicate those to any beneath himself which are the fruit of a nobler contrivance? No. Christ Jesus is therefore *made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glories, may glory in the* LORD.

(2.) These people who preached Christ among the Gentiles could never go farther in their duty Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9. to the great God than they did to him. *None of us,* say they, *lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's.* It is Jesus whom he speaks of as this Lord, as you see by

by the next words, *For to this end Chriſt both died,* SERM. 30.
and roſe, and revived, that HE *might be the Lord both of dead and living.* Thus the argument runs, *Ye are not your own, but bought with a price; and* 1 Cor. vi. ult.
therefore glorify God in your bodies, and your ſpirits, which are GOD'S. You are not your own, *Whoſe are you then?* If being bought with a price makes you belong to *another*, it muſt be to *Him* who paid that price: And who can that be? Or how are you to expreſs his propriety in you, but by *glorifying him as God*, and looking upon your bodies and ſpirits to be his? They are ſaid to be *God's*, and therefore if he who paid this price is not God, what he did gives him no claim upon us.

You ſee that this text will take a great deal of garbling to diſtinguiſh the ſhares of duty between the Father and the Son, if the one is the ſupreme Being, and the other but a creature. Thus when the Apoſtle ſaith, it was *his earneſt expectation, his* Phil. i. 20.
deſire, his confidence, that, as at all times, ſo now, CHRIST *ſhould be magnified in his mortal body, whether it be by life or by death; For*, ſaith he, *to me to live is Chriſt.* Could he poſſibly go any farther in a profeſſion of duty to the moſt high God? And has the Scripture been ſo laviſh in claiming our ſervice to Chriſt, that there is not the leaſt degree more reſerved for a Being that is infinitely greater than he?

Suppoſe we had never read any more than what the Apoſtle preached at Athens, that they ought not to think the Godhead like unto gold or ſilver, or ſtone graven with art and man's device, but look upon him as a Being that *made the heavens, the earth, and the ſea, and all things therein;* one whoſe image we are, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*, He adds, that this God *has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that* MAN *whom he has ordained, whereof he has given aſſurance to all men, in that he has raiſed him*

SERM. 30. *him from the dead.* Had we never read any more of Chriſt than what he ſaith here, we might have thought him to be nothing higher than a *man.* Now it is not to the human nature that he has committed this *judgment*; for though he that is the judge is a man, yet he muſt be *more* for that deſign.

But why ſhould he ever be repreſented as *God?* Why does the Apoſtle in other places give him higher titles than he uſes to theſe Athenians? The conſequence of this can be only enſnaring us in our duty if he is not God; and, for my part, I ſhall have no regard to their new ſchemes, till they can tell me how far I am to go in my devotion to a Saviour, and where I am to ſtop. For the Scripture has made it very dangerous to love him too little: Such a one muſt be *anathema, maran-atha;* and I am ſure it is idolatry to love him too much. And you need not ſay this is impoſſible, for if he is a creature, it is a very eaſy matter, and what the Pſalmiſt would have been afraid of, when he ſaid,

Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I deſire beſides thee.*

(3.) Chriſt maintains his intereſt in the moſt divine way, by a ſpiritual preſence with his people; ſo that though his body is in heaven, he is ſtill in every Chriſtian; and we dare not ſay to any but

Pſ. cxxxix. 3. 5. God, *Thou compaſſeſt my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. Thou haſt beſet me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me.* The heavens have received him till the time of the reſtitution of all things, yet it is language peculiar to a God to ſay, *I will walk among them, and be in them.* And we may ſoon ſuppoſe what

Gal. ii. 20. ſentiments Paul had of him, when he ſaith, *I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt lives in me, and the life I live in the fleſh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

SER-

SERMON XXXI.

July 5. 1723.

I AM now to ſhew you that this branch of Chriſtianity enjoys the ſame beautiful character that is given of all the reſt, that it is a Myſtery of GODLINESS, and promotes a *pure and undefiled religion before God and our Father.* For this, was Chriſt himſelf a preacher of righteouſneſs; for this did he ordain his witneſſes among thoſe he had choſen; for this, is the ſame *faithful word committed to others,* who are charged to hold it faſt, and to hold it forth. To this end is the word of ſalvation ſent among you. We therefore inſiſt upon a *hope that is laid up for you in heaven, that it* may *bring forth fruit in you, as it does in all the world* where it is heartily believed. And I think, this being the buſineſs of our preaching, the deſign of the miniſtry that we have received, it is ſuppoſed, that, in order to fulfil it, we proclaim the Divinity of that glorious Perſon whoſe name is to be carried among the Gentiles. *For,* he ſays, *from the riſing of the ſun even to the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered to* MY *name, and a pure offering; for* MY *name ſhall be great among the heathen, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

SERM. 31.

Jam. i. 27.

Col. i. 5, 6.

Mal. i. 11.

If he is not God, we are ſent upon a fooliſh errand, and tell the heathen no more than they imagine already, that there are ſupreme and ſubordinate deities. Perhaps, indeed, their number of *under-gods* is greater than ours in the new ſcheme, but the ſubſtance of their religion is the very ſame

SERM. 31. with what ſome people have given us for primitive Chriſtianity. They talk of a Trinity, by which they mean no more than one God, and two creatures. But *to whom will ye liken me, or ſhall I be equal? ſaith the Holy One.* Now as this is wide from the revelation that is given us in the Goſpel, ſo it is ſubverſive of all that practice, by which we are to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.*

Iſa. xl. 25.

Tit. ii. 10.

I will here endeavour to ſhew you the different tendency of preaching Chriſt as the true *God*, and giving him only the *name;* and by comparing theſe two ſorts of miniſters, you will eaſily ſee which of them is moſt likely to promote the reformation of ſinners, and the comfort of believers. And here, do not ſuppoſe that I am covering a cowardly deſign under a ſhew of deceitful words. When I ſay that the Son is God, I mean as much by the title as if I applied it to the Father; and without ſuch an upright unreſerved way of talking, I ſhould both impoſe upon you, and betray the doctrines of the Goſpel. Now, I ſay, that they who in preaching *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt* tell the Gentiles that he is truly, eternally, and ſupremely God, are moſt likely to attain the ends of the miniſtry of reconciliation that is committed to them. Becauſe

Theſe men ſpeak plain, we know what they mean; they come with a ſubject of their miniſtry that deſerves to be ſo; the account they give us of the Goſpel revelation is moſt agreeable to the merciful nature of our God, who never deſigned to betray us into idolatry; it is ſuch a report as anſwers the demand they make of our duty; it is harmonious to the nature of that dependence that we muſt have upon Chriſt; it provides for all the comfort we can ſtand in need of, and it gives a better proſpect of the future glory when we know the perſon from whom we expect it, is a God.

1. That

SERM. 31.

1. That miniſter who preaches up the Divinity of Chriſt, and tells the world plainly, that he is no other than the Moſt High God, is likely to promote religion among men, becauſe he ſpeaks out. We ſee, we know what he means. We are miniſters *according to the faith of God's elect, and the* ACKNOWLEDGING *of the truth which is after godlineſs: In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began; but has in due time manifeſted his word through preaching, which is committed to us, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.* God never ſent men abroad to ſhuffle with their learning, and make their ſkill in criticiſms, original languages, and ancient writers, no more than an occaſion to throw the world into the greateſt uncertainties about the chief object of their faith and hope. *Should a wiſe man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the eaſt wind? Should he reaſon with unprofitable talk, or with ſpeeches wherewith he can do no good?* Shall their *mouth utter their iniquity, and they chooſe the tongue of the crafty?*

Tit. i. 1, 2, 3. Job xv. 2, 3. 5.

Is that the fruit of ſtudying Greek and Hebrew, of turning over vaſt volumes of antiquity, that we ſhall grow more capable of unhinging mankind, removing them from their old foundation, without the honeſty of ſhewing them another. The Lord God gave to Chriſt *the tongue of the learned that he ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary*, not ſet him a rambling in eternal mazes, by words that are never to be underſtood. Are *thoſe* men of God's raiſing up, whoſe divinity goes no farther than to ſtrike off our faith from the perſon on whom it was fixed, and never tell us what is to become of it? Is that to be the reſult of all their enquiries, that they will uſe a good ſpirit, juſt as our Saviour ſaith it fares with an evil one; that it is ſent abroad, *ſeeking reſt and finding none? If the foundations be deſtroyed, what can the righteous*

Iſa. l. 4. Pſal. xi. 3.

SERM. 31. *righteous do?* No good end ever was anſwered, or ever can be, by thoſe ſhuffling arts, that leave the hearer more uncertain than they found him. If my opinion is agreeable to the will of God, I may
Eph. vi. 19, 20. tell it boldly, for ſo *I ought to ſpeak: Seeing we*
2 Cor. iii. 12, 13. —iv. 2. *have ſuch hope we uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech; not putting a vail over our faces as Moſes did;—renouncing the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of the Lord deceitfully.* The ſervants of ſuch a Maſter ought to uſe no diſguiſe and no reſerve; and for my part I can ſee no other end anſwered than to confound the world, when men are afraid to *call* our Saviour a creature, and yet take all the pains they can to *prove* him ſo.

What a ſcheme muſt that be, that allows him neither to be a *God* nor a *creature?* that explains away the *firſt* name, and trembles at giving the *ſecond?* What is the reaſon that men do not ſpeak out? Why muſt our doctrine be rejected for being myſterious and ſelf-contradicting, when here is another put upon us that appears to be *ſo* at the firſt opening? How monſtrous is it to talk of a created God? Or, of one that was not created, and yet had a beginning? Of a time that he was not, and yet that he is eternal? Of infinite perfections, and yet all derived? Of an Omniſcience that does not know all things, and an Omnipotence that cannot do all things? Really this is not diſputing about actions, but expreſſions; it is robbing us not only of doctrines but of words; it is uſing them in divinity, as they muſt be uſed no where elſe.
2 Cor. i. 13. *But we write no other things than what you read or acknowledge, and I truſt you ſhall acknowledge even to the end.*

Where is the neceſſity of a miniſter's doubling at this vile rate? Can we ever think that God ſent out any of his ſervants upon ſuch a fooliſh errand? Why muſt not mankind know what they mean?

What

What good end can they propound to themſelves, by deceiving people with *confeſſions*, and then explaining all the ſenſe of them away; leading the world into a confidence of their believing what indeed they abhor, and only waiting for a proper ſeaſon to laugh at the credulity of thoſe they have impoſed on? 'For my part, if I did not believe 'that Chriſt is *over all, God bleſſed for ever*, in the 'ſame ſenſe that the Father is ſo, I ſhould think 'it my duty to preach back what I have been advancing among you; not call your faith *to* him, 'but call it *from* him: I durſt not for any lucre of 'filth or fame, leave you at an uncertainty what 'I am ſpeaking of, nor could I expect any bleſſing upon that ſermon which gives ſuch a cha'racter of Jeſus Chriſt, that all the people who 'hear it, know not whether I am deſcribing a God 'or a creature, as if I was raiſing up an *altar with 'this inſcription, To the unknown God.* It does not 'only leave you hovering about a truth, but at a 'full ſtand in your duty.' SERM. 31.

We bid you *believe in him;* but can any mortal determine what is meant by this faith, if he does not know the object upon which it is to fix? The Apoſtles told their minds plainly in the face of as much danger as ever perſons did; but *as they were allowed of God, and put in truſt with the Goſpel, ſo they ſpake, not as pleaſing men, but God that ſearches the hearts; neither did they at any time uſe flattering words*, accommodating their doctrines to the humour of their hearers, *nor a cloak of covetouſneſs.* That opinion that is afraid of ſhewing itſelf, does not look like truth. If you ſee any light twinkling, and then falling back again, ſometimes out, and ſometimes in, you may be ſure it is not the ſun, but a trifling vapour, that appears for a moment and then vaniſhes away: And as it comes out of a *bog*, it will lead you into one. But I hope *we are not as many who corrupt the word of God; but* 1 Theſ. ii. 4, 5. 2 Cor. ii. 17.

as

SERM. 31. *as of ſincerity, as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.*

2. They who preach up Chriſt as the moſt High God, do inſiſt upon ſuch an object of their miniſtry as deſerves to be ſo. What a poor buſineſs would it be for men to have a miraculous furniture and a miraculous vocation, the gift of tongues, and the continual guard of providence, and all this to make known a creature? that when they rejoiced ſo much in the title of being the ſervants of Chriſt, they ſhould mean no more by it than their attachment to one who had nothing higher than derived perfections! Do they go and preach up one who is not to be adored?

That they ſpeak of him in a nature that is *not* omnipotent, and muſt not be worſhipped, that was dependent and paſſive, is true enough; but they had never been ſent out into the world, to tell mankind that he was born and lived with our infirmities, that he died and was buried. No, they muſt be *witneſſes* to theſe facts; but their being *ſervants* to him ſuppoſes a higher character, that he had in him a nature that had no beginning, no bounds, no pain, no death; therefore they might well talk of ſuch a one to the world, becauſe he
Joh. i. 3. made it: for *without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Conſider what it is to preach Chriſt Jeſus. There is a homage in this work, which no creature has ever challenged from us. The vile way of the Papiſts in running over the ſtory of a ſaint, propoſing him as a pattern, and offering his dry bones
Iſa. viii. 19 for the help of faith, is profane and fooliſh. *When they ſay to you, Seek to them that have familiar ſpirits, and to wizards, that peep and mutter: Should not a people ſeek to their God? for the living to the dead?* The root of ſuch a doctrine is rottenneſs, and the bloſſom of it ſhall go up as duſt. We may, and do mention the lives of miniſters and eminent Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, bidding you *follow their faith, and con-* SERM. 31.
ſider the end of their converſation; but will any Heb. xiii.
man call this *preaching* of Moſes or Paul? Nay, 7.
the very Angels who do us ſo many kind offices are not the ſubject of our miniſtry. We may preach of them as they are *miniſtring ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation*, but that is not calling mankind to depend upon them. They will not allow us to do any thing that has the leaſt reſemblance of an adoration. The Apoſtle John was much obliged to that Angel whom Chriſt had ſent with a revelation of things to come; he had led him through the apartments of the New Jeruſalem; he had ſhewed him that glorious city *coming down from* Rev. xxii.
God out of heaven, and yet he will not allow the 9.
good man to fall down at his feet.

I cannot imagine that the Apoſtle deſigned him what we call religious worſhip; for you muſt think him groſsly ignorant, if he could after all theſe diſcoveries confound his homage to God by giving it equally to him and to a creature; but he thought ſome degree of extraordinary reſpect ought to be ſhewn, and this the Angel will not ſuffer for that awful reaſon, *Worſhip thou God.*

Might he not eaſily have diſtinguiſhed about worſhip as ſome do in our day, and ſaid, There is a devotion that I pay to none but God, and this ſubordinate duty to thee is no breach of that? But the Angel leaves no room for that whiffling talk; he intimates, that there is always to be the greateſt and moſt viſible diſtinction between our behaviour to God, and that to a creature, let him be never ſo glorious and benevolent. Well,

Bring this to the caſe of our Saviour; if he was only a creature, he would always uſe the ſame freedom with his people that he did with the young man in the Goſpel, who took him for no more: *Why calleſt thou me Good, there is none good but one,* Mat. xix.
and that is God. But when we preach Him, it is 17.
in

SERM. 31. in the ſame way that we preach the Father, that he is the *Lord of the ends of the earth*, the God for whom are all things, and by whom are all things; we could not go out in the ſervice of one leſs than He. The heathen ſhall never have it to ſay of us, as we may of their prieſts, that we are ſervants of
Gal. iv. 8. thoſe who *by nature are no gods*. Angels themſelves are preachers of this Saviour, and what can that be owing to? Not his taking upon him our nature, for that made him lower than they; not his having a created nature above them, for that would no more make him the object of *their* worſhip than their ſuperiority to us makes them the object of *ours;* but they conſider him as their Author, and as their End, from whoſe hand they received their being, and to whoſe glory they muſt
Col. i. 16, 17. refer it. *For by him were all things created in heaven and in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him: He is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.* It is plain he ſpeaks of him here under another nature from what he does in the next clauſe, that *he is the firſt-begotten from the dead:* That did not prove him before all things, becauſe it happened in theſe laſt days.

No wonder that they who do not look upon him as a God, have more zeal againſt his divinity than they have for his honour: That all their ſtrength, and time, and learning, ſhould not be to lead on our duty to a Saviour, but to limit it, to ſtun it, to confound it. They cannot be ſaid to preach Chriſt Jeſus, *warning every man, and teaching every man.* They do *warn* every man indeed, not to look on him as a God, but they can hard-
1 Cor. xiv. 8. ly be ſaid to *teach* every man; for if *the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf for the battle?* and leaſt of all do they think to *preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* No really, if

if he is a creature there is no hopes of any perfection in him. It is said of a person who loves the light, that *he comes to the light, that it may be made manifest, that his deeds are wrought* IN GOD; and I should be ashamed to talk of your perfection IN CHRIST, if I did not think it an expression of the same import and value. But be it known to you, that our ministry is *not of deceit or guile.* We speak of Him who is the former of all things, and therefore are not *ashamed of the Gospel of* CHRIST, *because it is the power of* GOD. The Apostle speaks of *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, that was committed to his trust*, and adds in the same breath, *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, putting me into the ministry.* SERM. 31. Joh. iii. 21. Rom. i. 16. 1 Tim. i. 11, 12.

3. This account agrees with the merciful nature of God, that he should tell us things without the least disguise. *The words of the Lord are pure words.* He has called Angels and kings by his own name, they are *gods;* but what a bar is there between his title and theirs? *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* The Scripture has thrown us into no danger of confounding the two sorts of deities. No mortal can say, if he worships a prince, that he takes him to be omniscient and eternal, though he is called a god. Psal. xii. 6. Ps. lxxxix. 6.

The greatest affair that we can have upon our hands, is a devotion to him that made us; and therefore had he left us in the dark, whom to worship, and whom not, he had thrown his own glory under a cloud, and the souls of mankind into a snare. But it is written with all plainness, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* And how unhappy is it for us, that the duty we pay to Christ should go by the same name, and be expressed as if given in the Mat. iv. 10.

SERM. 31. ſame degree both in heaven and in earth, if he is not God?

To tell us that we ought to diſtinguiſh, is to tell us nothing to the purpoſe. The queſtion is, whether the difference lies ſo plain, that he that runs may read it? It is but a poor anſwer, to ſay there are men of critical learning who can ſoften and curtail the greateſt names that are given to a Saviour, and diveſt them of their greateſt ſenſe. What becomes of the ignorant, who are the more numerous part of the world? Could they find it out in the Scripture-trinity, that the firſt Perſon is divine and adorable, the ſecond divine but not adorable, the third neither adorable nor divine? Do not ſay, that it is not neceſſary for theſe to ſpeak of a Trinity, an hypoſtatical union, or the imputation of another's righteouſneſs; that a man may be very good and ſerious without entering into theſe ſpeculations. How dangerous is an inſinuation of this nature? Can a perſon be religious who worſhips he knows not what? who is at a loſs whether Chriſt Jeſus is the object of his reverence or no? who either does not know God, and not glorify him *as God?* or, on the other hand, is ſerving a creature equally with the Creator, who is over all, bleſſed for ever?

Here is a good man may be a believer, and yet at a loſs about the object of his faith. The love of Chriſt conſtrains him, and yet he knows not who Chriſt is. *He thus judges, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died, that they who live, ſhould not live to themſelves, but to him that died for them and roſe again.* It is as much as could be ſaid of the great God, that we live to him, and yet it is paid to one who by theſe men is ſuppoſed infinitely beneath him. But bleſſed be God, thoſe good people who will ſuffer no deviations from their duty, are in no uncertainty about him

2 Cor v. 14, 15.

him to whom it is given; he is declared to be the Son of God with power. *They know in whom they have believed.* As he is called God, they depend upon him with full confidence; and it is pity that they who ſhewed ſuch a zeal for the Goſpel in all ages ſhould be left in the dark, and be all along ſtrangers to a truth that is now brought to light by men that are not much ſuperior to them in holineſs, whatever they are in politeneſs. SERM. 31.

4. When we preach Chriſt as God, it anſwers the demand of your duty to him. We bid you pray to him, call upon him, truſt in him, and wait for him; which is more than we durſt do for a creature, becauſe it is as much as we can do for a God. Had we preached under the Old Teſtament, we muſt have inſiſted upon the glory of God, and the faithfulneſs of Moſes: That the great God had revealed his will, and Moſes was the perſon by whom the world ſhould have it, and therefore they are to believe in the one according to what they hear of him by the other. But there would be no confounding of theſe two. Certainly we muſt talk in a very unhappy way, if any of our hearers ſhould ſuppoſe we called for the ſame duty to Moſes that we did to God.

And yet in this promiſcuous manner do we ſpeak of the Father and the Son. *You believe in God*, ſaith Chriſt, *believe alſo in me.* We dare make no diſtinction, the words are plain, they need no changing: but upon ſuch a text, others will bring in a *Scripture-conſequence*, though we may not; that is, they will apply a conſequence to deſtroy the truth, and they are angry that we take ſuch a method to maintain it. We are commanded by theſe men to bring plain words of Scripture without any human explication; when we do ſo, they will not let them ſtand, but ſtrive to take off their native force and luſtre by the very method of interpretation which they deny to others Joh. xiv. 1.

If

SERM. 31. If Chriſt has not infinite perfections, what have we been doing among you? our preaching is in vain, and your faith in vain. We have argued, threatened, called, perſuaded, beſought you, to do what? to truſt in a God that cannot ſave? in one that has a name, but is infinitely beneath the eternal Nature? We ought to be afraid leſt your faith ſhould fix too low, and ſay as the Apoſtle did, *Ye men of Iſrael, why gaze ye on us, as though we by our own power and holineſs had made this man to walk.* And ſo here, we ſhould ſay, 'It is true, 'Chriſt this Saviour was very pure in himſelf, and 'very kind to you; you are to love him as a 'friend, and admire him as the chiefeſt among 'ten thouſand: but take care that you do not 'love him with all your heart, with all your mind, 'and with all your ſtrength. Remember the 'grace that he gives, and the glory that he pro-'miſes is not his own: he is only the ſervant, and 'therefore all your affections to him muſt be as 'much diſtinguiſhed from worſhip, as a creature 'is diſtinguiſhed from a God.'

But, as you know, we have never talked at this rate, ſo I am perſuaded it would ſtrike every ſerious perſon with horror if we ſhould, who could take the pulpit to be no better than *the ſeat of the ſcornful.* And yet thus we muſt have preached, if we had maintained any conſiſtence in our notions, or any honeſty to our people. I ſhould think it my duty, if I had been preaching never ſo long about the glorious nature of the Angels, and the innumerable offices of kindneſs they have done us, ſtill to cloſe all with a warning leſt you ſhould run into *a worſhipping of Angels.* Now the danger would be greater, as Chriſt is more excellent than they; and therefore if he was not the proper object of our worſhip, we ought not to leave you in the ſnare.

5. This

5. This agrees to the nature of your dependence upon him. Our Gospel tells us, there is *salvation in no other*. And he himself said, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*. So that our whole regard is collected to him. There is no putting him off with a share of it, but he must have it all. And will He, who is a jealous God, and has plainly told us, Thou shalt have *no other gods before me*, suffer all this plunder from a creature? Though an Angel is a great deal better than a prince, yet I should sooner be admitted to trust in the latter than the former: for perhaps a vain foolish man would allow me in all the extravagance of my faith upon him; but an Angel would immediately say, *See thou do it not;* and he must be very unworthy of the Divine favours to him if he did not so. SERM. 31.

Now, if Christ Jesus is better than the Angels, and still a creature, I should expect more zeal from Him than from them against any misapplication of my faith and duty. He of all others would never say, *Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth*, if he could not also say, *I am God, and there is none else*. It was Lucifer's wickedness, when he was made the son of the morning, that he would *set his throne as the throne of God*. The dignity of his nature was an aggravation of his crime; and so it would be in our blessed Lord. All his advancement above the Angels obliges *him* more than *them* to secure the Divine honour entire by taking none of it to himself. Isa. xlv. 22. —xiv. 12.

6. This provides for all the comfort that we can stand in need of. We have it in Christ, who said, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you: In the world ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall have peace*. This peace and joy come in a way of *believing;* our faith upon him fetches it down: And can we think that a creature is able to do all this? Joh. xiv. 27. —xvi. 33.

When

SERM. 31. When David ſaith, *Strengthen me with ſtrength in*
Pſ. cxxxviii. 3. *my ſoul*, I cannot ſuppoſe but that he ſpeaks of a Divine operation; ſomething that none but a God can do. And do believers under the New Teſtament look any lower for their conſolations than thoſe under the Old? The Pſalmiſt could ſay,
—lxxiii. 25, 26. *Whom have I in heaven but Thee? my fleſh and my heart fails; but* GOD *is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And have we *One more* in heaven beſides him? Is ours a deſcending, a falling faith? Does it come *down* from its chief object, and find a partner with God? Do you
2 Tim. iv. 17. think when the Apoſtle ſaith, *The Lord ſtood by me, and ſtrengthened me*, he means any leſs than that God, who was the ſtrength of David's heart? A creature may pity you, but a God, you are ſure, is capable of helping you. Now Chriſt is He,
1 Pet. i. 8. *whom having not ſeen, ye love, and in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with a joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*

ver. 9. 7. This gives us a better proſpect of the future glory: *The end of your faith is the ſalvation of your ſouls.* When we tell you of heaven, and you hear that life and immortality are brought to light by the Goſpel, it is Chriſt that muſt convey you thi-
Joh. xiv. 3. ther: *I will come again*, ſaith he, *and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, ye may be alſo.* But how vain would it be to have this ſaid of a creature? We find it hard enough to believe that *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt;* but if he was not a God, thoſe difficulties would increaſe upon us. Our
Eph. vi. 10. faith ſtands *in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

We cannot tell but an Angel is mighty enough to carry our ſouls through the air into the region of ſpirits, as it is ſaid they did that of Lazarus; but on purpoſe to let us ſee what we have to truſt to, our expectations are fixed a great deal higher. And when Chriſt ſaith, I will receive you to myſelf,

ſelf, I believe it is a promiſe equivalent to David's hope: *Thou wilt guide me by thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to thy glory.* Do not think that he under the Old Teſtament had his dependence upon God, and that we in theſe better days have our faith and confidence in no more than a creature. SERM. 31.

The application of this is what I have but little room for: I will therefore confine myſelf to theſe three particulars.

(1.) If it is GOD whom we preach to the Gentiles, a God manifeſt in the fleſh, then you may be very ſure we have no reaſon to be aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor ought you to be aſhamed of thoſe that are *his priſoners, but be partakers of the afflictions of the Goſpel according to the power of God.* Not but that we are like to meet with the ſame reproach among Chriſtians, that the Apoſtles did among the heathen. In preaching up the Deity of Chriſt Jeſus, ſome are ready now to repreſent us as *ſetters forth of ſtrange gods.* 2 Tim. i. 8. Acts xvii. 18.

Could we have been content to have ſhunned or amended the faith that was once delivered to the ſaints, the enemy would have had as little provocation as they have real ground for a volley of reproaches. We ſhould never have been charged with ſetting up a human authority, or framing a court of *inquiſition*, or depreciating the word of God. Men that depart from this doctrine, ſtand clear of theſe accuſations, though it is known well enough their ſcheme will never do in the bare language of ſcripture. They have leave to talk of an originated God, and an improper eternity, and uſe as many barbarous terms as they pleaſe, without any blame for departing from the words of the Bible. What plain paſſages are there in the way, which they are forced to work themſelves through with diſtinctions and expoſitions? This liberty of explaining

SERM. 31. explaining a notion in them is free thinking; but in us it is laying aſide *the form of ſound words.*— Well, my friends, the cauſe we are engaged in is worth all this, and a thouſand times more; for if it is a God whom we preach, we know he both can and will maintain his intereſt, and he will alſo own his ſervants who have owned him; for ſuch a one alone is *Head over all things unto the Church,* as he has *the fulneſs of him that fills all in all.*

(2.) Let us, upon this account, recommend ourſelves to your friendſhip and hearty prayers. You ſee we are *ſet for the defence of the Goſpel.* Reproaches fly about of an unuſual kind, and from
2 Theſ. iii. 2. an unſuſpected quarter: *Pray that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.* Suppoſe the enemy ſhould prevail to ſtop our mouths, or pollute our integrity, and that you are brought to attend upon miniſters, whoſe prudence will not ſuffer them to tell you that Chriſt is God; what would become of religion in your cloſets and your families? therefore ſuffer me to beſpeak your kindneſs as the Apoſtle
Col. iv. 3, 4. does: *Pray for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt, (for which I am alſo in bonds), that I may make it manifeſt as I ought to ſpeak.*

(3.) It is from our preaching Chriſt as GOD, that we can have any hope that he is *believed on in the world.*

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.